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OPINION METER

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BUSINESS



Carlos Slim remains the world's richest man for the fourth year.

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An underworld saint is becoming more popular in the U.S.

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Writ on govt funds stayed for now

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Superior Court Associate Judge David A. Wiseman, who gave the order Friday for CNMI banks to release government funds to pay a land compensation claim, agreed yesterday to temporarily suspend the directive.

Budget cuts could hurt pivot to Asia-Pacific

By **MATTHEW PENNINGTON**
ASSOCIATED PRESS



Obama

WASHINGTON (AP)—Stiff budget cuts that took effect Friday because of a political standoff over America's burgeoning debt could crimp U.S. military activity in the Asia-Pacific,

just as Washington seeks to reassure friends and allies of its staying power in the region.

The impact is unlikely to be sudden or stark. There won't be a dramatic with-

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➤ **Larson: Govt accounts in 2 banks frozen for past 3 days**

said his tentative ruling is to grant the government's motion pending appeal.

At the same time, Wiseman consid-

In a hearing yesterday on the government's motion for a stay on the writ of execution, Wiseman



Wiseman

ered "bizarre, outrageous, and false" the language that assistant attorney general Charles E. Brasington used in appealing the writ of execution. Wiseman said he is

considering bringing disciplinary action against Brasington before the CNMI Bar.

Wiseman's writ of execution directed banks in the CNMI to release funds belonging to the CNMI government in order to pay the land compensation claim of 80-year-old Luisa Borja Quitugua, amounting to \$77,137 plus interest.

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'We're governor, lt. governor for NMI'

➤ **New Tinian senator also takes oath of office**

By **HAIDEE V. EUGENIO**
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REPORTER

TINIAN—Lt. Gov. Jude U. Hofschneider took his oath of office anew yesterday, this time at a public swearing-in ceremony that also celebrated the installation of the CNMI's first lieutenant governor from Tinian.

Gov. Eloy S. Inos, himself the first governor to come from Rota, reminded that he and Hofschneider are governor and lieutenant governor "for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands."

Inos said the problems facing the CNMI "do not discriminate between party lines and political ideas" either.

"We are all equal stakeholders and we need to do something about it," the governor said, as he called on every member of the community to work with the administration in addressing its priorities: the economy, healthcare, NMI Retirement Fund, and

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HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Lt. Gov. Jude U. Hofschneider, right, takes his oath of office while his daughters Ashley, left, holds the Bible, and Alexis, center, holds the microphone at his public swearing-in at the packed Tinian Courthouse yesterday, some two weeks after he ascended to his new post. Other photo shows Joaquin H. Borja, right, taking his oath of office as a senator representing Tinian while his wife Jeanette, left, holds the Bible.

Hofschneider Swearing-in

Photos by HAIDEE V. EUGENIO



Community members and visiting dignitaries wait outside the Tinian Courthouse for the start of a public swearing-in ceremony for Lt. Gov. Jude U. Hofschneider yesterday. Hofschneider is the first CNMI lieutenant governor from Tinian.



A crowd enters the Tinian Courthouse to witness the public swearing-in ceremony for Lt. Gov. Jude U. Hofschneider.



Gov. Eloy S. Inos, Lt. Gov. Jude U. Hofschneider, Supreme Court Chief Justice Alexandro Castro, Superior Court Presiding Judge Robert Naraja, and Attorney General Joey Patrick San Nicolas join members of the House of Representatives and Senate for a group photo.



From left, Attorney General Joey Patrick San Nicolas, Tinian Mayor Ramon Dela Cruz, Gov. Eloy S. Inos, Lt. Gov. Jude U. Hofschneider, Saipan Mayor Donald Flores, and Rota Mayor Melchor Mendiola.



Gov. Eloy S. Inos joins Lt. Gov. Jude U. Hofschneider and his family for a group photo.



Michaela U. Sanchez, left, and Arsene M. Borja, right, take their oath of office as Northern Marianas College Board of Regents member and Civil Service Commission member, respectively, at the Tinian Courthouse yesterday.



Alexis B. Hofschneider, left, leads the singing of the CNMI and U.S. national anthems.



From left, CNMI Supreme Court Chief Justice Alexandro Castro, Gov. Eloy S. Inos, and Lt. Gov. Jude U. Hofschneider sing the CNMI and U.S. national anthems.

DCCA, DPS reorganization on the drawing board—Inos

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

TINIAN—Gov. Eloy S. Inos said yesterday that there will be further reorganization at the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, along with the Department of Public Safety, in addition to his earlier disclosure of plans to transfer the operation and management of the Oleai Sports Complex from DCCA to an entity such as the Northern Marianas Amateur Sports Association.

“There will be more,” Inos told reporters after the public swearing-in of Lt. Gov. Jude U. Hofschneider at the Tinian Courthouse.

For example, there will be consolidation of some activities between DCCA and the Indigenous Affairs Office.

However, there have been some issues with the Historic Preservation Office over federal grant recipient and grantor relationship, he said.

“Maybe outside of that we might be able to move some of the things. ...We are going to look at DPS also and maybe we can spin off some of the ongoing activities to other areas but we need to sit down with the new commissioner and discuss those areas because being a new commissioner I’m sure he’s got his own ideas as well so we need to get his input,” Inos added.

The Inos administration is revisiting the recommenda-

tions of an independent firm that did a desk audit on DCCA and DPS in 2010.

The Virginia-based Management Analysis Inc. had determined that DCCA and DPS are each overstaffed and have employees with overlapping functions.

MAI had also recommended renaming DCCA to Department of Human Services so it would be more focused in its mission of providing services.

It recommended moving the functions of DCCA’s Division of Sports and Recreation to the Northern Marianas Amateur Sports Association, which the Inos administration said on Monday it could implement in the current fiscal year instead of waiting for fiscal year 2014.

MAI also recommended the following: Moving DCCA’s Juvenile Detention Facility to the Department of Corrections; moving DCCA’s Juvenile Probation Unit to the Superior Court; and moving DCCA’s other divisions—including the Chamorro/Carolinian Language Policy Commission, the Commonwealth Council for Arts and Culture, and the Historic Preservation Office—under the Office of the Resident Director for Indigenous Affairs. The latter would create a department that preserves history, culture, and festivals.

As of yesterday, there’s no telling whether any of these additional recommendations will be considered.

So far, the specific plans that Inos shared is privatizing parks maintenance and merging the Department of Labor and Workforce Investment Agency.

Inos said yesterday that his administration does not want a massive reorganization all at once.

“We have to be very careful with these things. We want to make sure what we set out to do is something that works out. ...We still have time to look at some of these low-hanging fruit type of activi-

ties...we just need to move them from public service to private services,” he added.

Lt. Gov. Jude U. Hofschneider, in a separate interview, said he and the governor continue to review the performance reports submitted by agencies and these reports will help them in making decisions to “right-size” the government while providing needed public service.

“If not constitutionally prohibited, we will look at the Affairs Office...Some agencies like Division of Parks and Recreation, DCCA, Mayor’s Office and the Marianas Visitors Authority, they have some duplicate functions, sometimes they do the same thing,” he added.

As to former governor

Froilan Tenorio’s call on the Inos administration to show it is different, Inos had this to say: “We do what we need to do to make a difference to improve the lives of the people. We are

not going to be different just for the sake of being different. We will do what we feel we need to do and hopefully in the process, if that translates to a different approach, so be it.”



Inos

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Scooter driver guilty of ‘ice’ possession

By FERGIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

A scooter operator found in possession of less than a gram of methamphetamine or “ice” during a sobriety checkpoint in Chalan Piao was convicted yesterday in Superior Court.

In a bench trial that lasted only a day, Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho found Fu Zhu Lin guilty of illegal possession of controlled substance.

Lin will be sentenced today, Wednesday, at 9am. He was remanded into the custody of the Department of Corrections.

Camacho deemed credible the testimonies of six witnesses, including Guam Police Department criminalist Analyn Gatus Akigami, who testified that the illegal drug tested positive for methamphetamine.

Lin had testified that he was not aware it was “ice,” thinking it was some type of medicine.

“His behavior defies common sense,” Camacho said, pointing out that Lin tried to hide the “ice” by passing it to his passenger.

Assistant attorney general Margo Brown prosecuted the case. Assistant public defender Daniel Guidotti served as coun-

sel for the defendant.

Police officers seized a small baggie containing “ice” from Lin’s companion, Mei Ying Qi, after the officers saw Lin passing the item to Qi at a sobriety checkpoint in Chalan Piao on Dec. 24, 2011.

Lin was driving a scooter with Qi as his passenger when they were randomly waved into the sobriety checkpoint by an officer.

Upon entering the checkpoint, Lin encountered another officer, who found an expired 2005 registration sticker on the license plate of Lin’s scooter.

The officer then directed Lin and Qi to the citation area where it was found that he was driving without a driver’s license. Lin was only able to provide an expired registration card for the scooter.

He was issued a traffic citation and arrested for driving a motor vehicle without a driver’s license.

An officer then did a pat-down search of Lin for weapons and drugs and noticed him hand something to Qi, who immediately concealed the item in her blouse. The officers retrieved the item, which later tested positive for “ice.”

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GOVERNOR

From Page 1

lowering utility costs.

The new governor is the Covenant Party's titular head, while the lieutenant governor is a Republican.

Most House and Senate members do not belong to any one dominating political party either.

For the first time in the longest time, there is no majority party and opposition party in CNMI politics.

Tinian Mayor Ramon Dela Cruz himself said in his welcoming remarks that this is "truly time for a new beginning, a new chapter in our Commonwealth history."

"A clean slate, if you will, where we all contribute and have a more active role in the decision making in local matters. We now have the opportunity to work together to move our Commonwealth forward intelligently, purposefully, and responsibly," Dela Cruz said.

Within days of the Inos administration's installation on Feb. 20 after the resignation of former governor Benigno R. Fitial, plans to reduce government spending and size have been crafted such as merging offices with similar functions or privatizing other government services, freezing salary increases and hiring, signing of a request to extradite former attorney general and now fugitive from jus-

tice Edward T. Buckingham III, and realigning limited resources to pump more funds into priority areas.

"We may not be able to finish everything, solve all the problems but at least we need to show our people that we do care and that we can start doing the right thing," Inos told the crowd that packed the Tinian Courthouse. Inos always only has talking points but not a written speech prepared beforehand.

Hofschneider, in his inaugural speech, said that a government "destined to fail" was created throughout the years because leaders and people prioritized short-term gains over long-term sustainability, and special interest groups were accommodated while sacrificing the needs of the majority, among other things.

"I want to be clear that I am not trying to place blame or make excuses for the difficulties that we are facing. On the contrary, I believe that whatever brought us to this point is in the past and our job now is to address the future. We should learn from our mistakes but should not dwell on them," he said.

In an interview later, Hofschneider said there would be unpopular but necessary steps that need to be taken to keep the CNMI moving forward.

Major tasks, too little time

The governor, as well as the lieutenant governor, said the problems are "so immense" and their administration has a mere 20 months to work on

them compared to previous administration that usually had 48 months "to work things out."

"It's an uphill battle but nevertheless we have agreed to take the bull by the horn," Inos added.

CNMI Supreme Court Chief Justice Alexandro Castro administered the ceremonial oath of office for Hofschneider, with the latter's daughters Ashley holding the Bible and Alexis holding the microphone.

Besides the governor, many other CNMI officials from the executive, legislative and judicial branches based on Saipan and Rota flew to Tinian to take part in Hofschneider's ceremonial oath-taking rites.

Guam Speaker Judi Won Pat and Guam Sen. Anthony Ada were also present.

The ceremonial swearing-in was preceded by a 10am inaugural Mass at the San Jose Parish. The refreshments that followed the swearing-in were served and contributed by Hofschneider's family, friends, and other members of the community.

The original ceremonial activities were substantially scaled back in recognition of the government's tight finances and, more recently, the writ of execution against all monies and accounts in the CNMI to address an outstanding land claim.

New senator

Two hours later, a newly appointed

Tinian senator to fill the vacancy that Hofschneider left at the Senate was also sworn into office yesterday.

Superior Court Presiding Judge Robert Naraja administered the oath of office for Joaquin Hoashi Borja, who will serve the remainder of Hofschneider's term until January 2015.

The governor appointed Borja last Thursday.

The CNMI Constitution states that if less than half of the term remains, the governor shall fill the vacancy by appointing the unsuccessful candidate for the office in the last election who got the largest number of votes.

Borja ran under former governor Benigno R. Fitial's Republican Party in the Nov. 6 mid-term elections, losing to Sen. Francisco M. Borja (Ind-Tinian). He also finished third in the 2009 race won by Hofschneider and Sen. Frank Cruz (R-Tinian). His term will end in January 2015.

Also sworn in yesterday at the Tinian Courthouse were Arsene M. Borja to serve on the Civil Service Commission, and Michaela U. Sanchez to serve on the Northern Marianas College Board of Regents.

Ray Cing served as master of ceremony, while Fr. Ryan Jimenez led the invocation and benediction.

'Young voices'

The young people of Tinian also have high hopes for having a first lieutenant governor from Tinian.

Leona C. Dela Cruz, 14, a member of the National Honor Society at Tinian Junior/Senior High School, said that "Tinian will get more involved" in the workings of the central government.

Gerald K. Crisostomo, 13, also a member of Tinian Junior/Senior High School's National Honor Society, said "Tinian will have a stronger voice in the government."

"I hope Tinian schools will have more funds to be able to hire more teachers. We lack teachers here," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

Hofschneider, 42, started as deputy director for the Department of Public Works-Tinian. His first entry into politics was when he ran and won a seat on the Tinian Municipal Council. He was elected senator representing Tinian during the 16th, 17th and 18th legislatures.

Hofschneider's term as Senate president in the current 18th Legislature in January this year was short-lived because he ascended to the lieutenant governor post when Fitial stepped down and Inos became governor.

As the Tinian mayor put it during yesterday's ceremony, Hofschneider is the first Senate president in CNMI history to serve for only a month.

Toward the end of his speech, Hofschneider said, "Governor, it's time to make a difference. Let's make the CNMI proud."

BUDGET

From Page 1

drawal of U.S. forces from bases in South Korea and Japan. But it could mean fewer military exercises and operations by ships and aircraft in the region, even as the U.S. winds down its war in Afghanistan.

While the administration says it is committed to its strategy of "rebalancing" toward Asia, a sense of foreboding pervades U.S. policymakers due to uncertainty over how the 9-percent cut in the defense budget and lesser cuts in

other branches of government will be absorbed, and how it will affect America's standing as a Pacific power.

The cuts are the result of a deadline set after earlier negotiations on trimming the debt by \$1.2 trillion over a decade hit an impasse.

It's hard to gauge the impact of the cuts. They are certain to be felt most acutely at home with military personnel facing forced leaves and a freeze in hiring civilian contractors. But they will be felt too in U.S. operations overseas. One aircraft carrier has already delayed a planned trip to the Persian Gulf.

The U.S. wants to scale back its emphasis on the turbulent Middle East and build up its presence in Asia, a region of growing economic importance but roiled by its own tensions due to North Korean long-range rocket and nuclear tests and maritime territorial disputes between China and its neighbors.

Bonnie Glaser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank said Asia-Pacific nations are already insecure about U.S. commitment to the region, although it retains 80,000 troops in Japan and South Korea. That's partly driven by uncertainty over whether Secretary of State John

Kerry will be as focused on the region as his predecessor, Hillary Rodham Clinton. She had made her first overseas trip as America's top diplomat to Asia, while Kerry opted for a marathon swing across Europe and the Middle East. Glaser said the budget cuts would only exacerbate concerns about whether Washington can sustain its level of engagement.

The best case scenario on resolving the budget standoff is if Democrats and Republicans reach agreement in the coming weeks and stop the cuts. There's no sign that's imminent, but pressure for a deal will intensify by late

March, when the government faces a possible shutdown.

As things stand, the Pentagon has to cut \$46 billion in spending through the end of September. It faces more cuts in future years unless a compromise is reached. The military also has to absorb a \$487 billion reduction in defense spending over the next 10 years, mandated by legislation in 2011. Worsening matters, the failure to agree on a budget for this year has kept spending levels at last year's rates. That's already hampering plans to roll out the new Asia-orientated defense strategy.

WRIT

From Page 1

'False threat'

Wiseman took exception to the language used by government lawyers in appealing the writ of execution, characterizing it as exaggerated and unsubstantiated.

He said that Brasington, as the author of the motion, falsely stated a threat of a complete and total shutdown of government services. He said Brasington wrongfully gave a gross misconception of what to expect if the writ of execution goes through.

"In my opinion, you owe them, the people of the CNMI and this court an apology for your bizarre, outrageous, and unsubstantiated predictions of death, injuries, deprivations of all public services whatsoever," Wiseman said.

Frozen accounts

In an interview after the hearing, Finance Secretary Larrisa Larson told reporters that the CNMI has accounts in two of three banks that are subject of the writ of execution.

Larson said the two banks have legal questions about the writ so they froze the government's bank accounts.

"So we have no access to any funds for the last three days. And that's the

difficulty because we're running payroll this week," she said.

Larson also disclosed that medical referral accounts have been frozen, too.

"So if there is any patient off-island receiving treatment, there is no way that anyone can write checks against those accounts. So their impact is rather significant. Everything was frozen," she said.

Writ of execution

In 2005, the Superior Court awarded Quitugua \$77,137 plus interest for her land compensation claim. Seven years later or in November 2012, the government paid Quitugua just \$10,000.

Quitugua then asked the court to issue a writ of execution, seeking from the government all funds it has in CNMI banks to satisfy the full amount.

In granting a writ of execution Friday, Wiseman ordered the Bank of Guam, Bank of Hawaii, and First Hawaiian Bank to release and deliver to Quitugua's lawyer, F. Matthew Smith's law firm, the funds they are holding that belong to the CNMI government.

Wiseman said any funds received by Quitugua shall be kept in Smith's trust account and will not be disbursed without a court order.

"A report shall be made to the court within 48 hours of obtaining any funds under this writ. Upon receiving such

report, the court shall then determine the amount, including applicable interest, due to [Quitugua]," the judge said in the writ order.

A day later, the government, through Brasington, filed a motion to stay the writ of execution.

Insolvency

Brasington said with the writ of execution will result in the CNMI government being unable to pay the salaries of employees of all three branches of government.

"The Commonwealth will be unable to buy gas for fire trucks and police vehicles. The Commonwealth will be unable to provide education or pay teachers," he said.

Brasington said the order, together with the precedent it would create for other land compensation judgments totaling up to \$18 million, would force the Commonwealth into insolvency and will hamper its ability to meet payroll for all three branches of government, make bond payments, pay for utilities, and meeting other obligations.

Brasington said the writ of execution threatens the residents and dependents of the Commonwealth "with the potential loss of life and limb."

The Commonwealth, he said, will be unable to pay its emergency medical technicians, firefighters, police,

lawyers, judges, and other law enforcement officers.

"People will die or suffer serious irreversible injury that could have otherwise been averted," he said.

"Fires will rage, consuming structures, jungle, and the human and animal life residing therein. Crimes will go uninvestigated and perpetrators of violence will go unpunished," he added.

Unnecessary

In Quitugua's opposition to the stay, attorney Jennifer Dockter said the government cannot show any likelihood of success on the merits as its arguments "meekly attempt to distinguish well-reasoned, well-developed case law that is simply undistinguishable."

"A stay on the writ of execution is unnecessary, has not been shown to be necessary, and does nothing but permit continued deprivation of sacred rights," Dockter said.

She said the writ will not break the Commonwealth.

"A government [that] denies its citizens their sacred constitutional rights and then calls the remedy for those violations senseless is a government that is already broken," Dockter said.

Without any evidence, the government speculates wildly about a coming Armageddon if the writ is executed, she added.

"Wild speculation about raging fires and dying animals, while appropriately suited for television dramas, does not have a place in this motion," she said.

Dockter pointed out that the judgment at issue is only about \$140,000—not \$18 million.

Tentative ruling

Brasington appeared in court but it was assistant attorney general Viola Alepuyo who argued for the government.

Before announcing his tentative ruling, Wiseman said the government's brief raises what he deems as a major false alarm by its prediction of a total demise of the CNMI if the writ is not stayed.

To use the words of Quitugua, the judge said, Brasington has speculated about a coming Armageddon.

"Hopefully, the public's confidence in the Judiciary has not been too affected by your statements," Wiseman said.

Dockter told reporters after the hearing that Quitugua, who attended the hearing on a wheelchair, is already desperate.

"She's extraordinarily upset and she fears that she's not going to have resolution in her lifetime. And I think that's a real threat," Dockter said.

Quitugua's land compensation claim has been pending for 30 years now.

'Employment contracts of nurses automatically renewed'

»One-month housing allowance for hospital staff released

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
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REPORTER

Hospital staff now working without new employment contracts should not worry following disclosure by Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. CEO Juan N. Babauta that their contracts have been automatically renewed.

Babauta said that personnel contracts that expired since 2011 were automatically renewed under the same terms

and conditions.

Under these terms, the housing allowance for off-island hires will still be provided—until any amendment is finalized and executed, he added.

"It's not true that they're working without contracts because they have been automatically renewed and extended... and that contract continues to be paid," Babauta told *Saipan Tribune*. Proof of this is the regular salary these personnel continue

to receive, he said.

Many hospital employees, mostly nurses, earlier expressed concern about their status as they have yet to sign a new contract after their initial contract's expiration. They also did not get any notice that their contracts have been automatically renewed for another year.

Some affected employees expressed hope yesterday that the corporation will notify them in the future about the status of their

contracts to avoid any confusion.

According to Babauta, the delay in the issuance or processing of the new contracts is due to the slow response of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

As of January, USCIS had approved only 36 out of the 120 CW applications filed by the corporation.

Babauta said this is causing uncertainty not only among affected employees but for the public hospital as well because

these workers are critical to the Commonwealth Health Center's operation.

Housing allowance

Meantime, employees were elated to receive on Monday a portion of their delayed housing allowance. The corporation issued the housing perk for July 2012 amounting to \$600 for single employees and \$800 for those with families. This benefit is provided to workers hired from outside the Commonwealth. There are 130 per-

sonnel that get this perk.

To date, the corporation is still behind by eight months on the housing allowance.

The lack of employment contracts at CHC was raised by board member Anthony Raho at the last board meeting. He urged the corporation to communicate with employees on issues that they need to be informed about.

Meantime, *Saipan Tribune* learned that the salaries of doctors and other clinical staff at CHC were adjusted to add the housing benefit to their salary base.

SBDC brings resources to bear on Tinian, Rota

By **CLARISSA V. DAVID**
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REPORTER

The CNMI Small Business Development Center is widening its focus to include the islands of Tinian and Rota, according to director Perry A. Inos, Jr.

Inos said that since being part of the center a year ago, he has made it a point to get to those islands and talk to their business communities.

Speaking at the Rotary Club of Saipan meeting yesterday, Inos noted the "big disconnect" of Tinian and Rota to the island of Saipan.

"We're trying to bring whatever resources we have on hand to these island communities where the need is much greater than us here," he told Rotarians.

The CNMI SBDC is part of the Pacific Islands Small Business Development Network and is funded in part by the Commonwealth Development Authority and the Department of Commerce.

Its mission is to support the growth and economic develop-



Perry A. Inos, Jr., director of the CNMI Small Business Development Center, speaks at the Rotary Club of Saipan meeting yesterday.

ment of U.S.-affiliated Pacific islands in the Western Pacific by providing one-on-one confidential counseling and training to existing and prospective small businesses.

The center works in partner-

ship with the U.S. Small Business Administration, Saipan Chamber of Commerce, CDA, Commerce, Tinian Chamber of Commerce, Tinian and Rota Mayor's offices, and the Northern Marianas Trades Institute.

PSS teachers want TOY appointed to education board

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
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REPORTER

Classroom teachers in public schools have had no representative on the CNMI State Board of Education for six years now. To remedy this, many teachers now want the Teacher of the Year awardee to be appointed as their representative on the board.

This was the result of a survey conducted by the Public School System among teachers, a majority of whom supported the proposal to have the TOY awardee be their board representative.

This year's CNMI Teacher of the Year is Peter Loken of Garapan Elementary School.

Education Commissioner Rita A. Sablan, Ed.D., told *Saipan Tribune* that the survey was done in December and the final result came out in February.

Under the law, public school teachers are supposed to have one non-voting representative on the Board of Education.

The governor is the appointing authority for the honorary members of the education board. These positions include public schools teachers' representative, private school teachers' representative, and students'

representative. The five other voting members of the BOE are elected.

"Our teachers would like to see that the selection [for the teachers' representative on BOE] be made out from the pool of TOYs [teacher of the year nominees]. For the alternate member, they recommended the inclusion of the PSS instructor of the year," said Sablan, adding that these recommendations will be forwarded to Gov. Eloy S. Inos for his consideration.

Sablan said the appointment of a PSS teachers' representative on the BOE is "long overdue." As a result of this vacancy, the commissioner consults with teachers through an advisory panel that she created.

Despite the existence of this panel, Sablan believes that there's a need for all parties to be formally represented on the board.

"Our teachers have spoken on the issue...and we appreciate it if the governor can make the appointment because we really need a teachers' rep [on] the education board," added Sablan.

According to BOE chair Herman T. Guerrero, past administration and legislatures were non-responsive on the requests

of PSS and the board to fill important vacancies on the board. He cited several letters sent to both the Executive Branch and the Legislature urging appointment to these positions. In 2011, BOE even provided the Legislature "starting points" for the selection of a teachers' representative.

The last teachers' representative was Ambrose Bennett, whose term expired in January 2008. Nobody has succeeded him since then due to constitutionality issues raised in the selection process.

Guerrero said the board made numerous attempts to engage lawmakers in formulating policy so that a teacher can be placed on the position, to no avail.

Among past recommendations were a teacher organization election, the automatic appointment of the president of the teacher organization, and a general election among all teachers.

Saipan Tribune learned that since Article 15 Section 1(c) of the Constitution was amended in 2009, the process of establishing the selection process for the teachers' representative became the responsibility of the Legislature.



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Office of the Secretary

Caller Box 10007, Saipan, M.P. 96950 • Tel. 664-2576 • Fax. 664-2570

CHILD CARE LICENSING PROGRAM Informative Drive

Are you interested to open a day care program or an afterschool program? If you are and would like to know how to go about doing it, please join us in one of our Information Drive scheduled as followed:

DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Every First Thursday of the Month	5:00p.m. to 7:00p.m. Information Booth Only	Garapan Street Market Garapan Fishing Base
Wednesday, March 27, 2013	6:00pm. To 7:00p.m. with presentation • Minimum of 10 participants	American Memorial Park Theater
Wednesday, June 26, 2013	6:00pm. To 7:00p.m. with presentation • Minimum of 10 participants	American Memorial Park Theater
Wednesday, September 25, 2013	6:00pm. To 7:00p.m. with presentation • Minimum of 10 participants	American Memorial Park Theater
Friday, March 15, 2013	9:00a.m. to 2:00p.m.	Rota DCCA Office
Friday, March 22, 2013	9:00a.m. to 2:00p.m.	Tinian DCCA Office

The Child Care Licensing Program will be conducting scheduled information drive on the above dates and times. For those interested to attend the American Memorial Park Theater presentation, kindly call the Child Care Licensing Program at 664-2577 and look for Leilani Marciano to reserve your space. Only a maximum of 25 participants will be accommodated.

Approved for distribution: /s/ Melvin L.O. Faisao
DCCA Secretary

Date: February 15, 2013

Funding from the Office of Child Care, US Department of Health and Human Services,
Administration for Children and Families

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BEST affordable rates on island!
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 Located in Chalan Lamlau, Middle Rd.
Some conditions may apply

Municipal council takes on role as employment facilitator

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Saipan & Northern Islands Municipal Council has partnered with the Workforce Investment Agency as the council takes on the role of facilitator in addressing unemployment among U.S. eligible workers in the Commonwealth.

Council members Ramon B. Camacho and Antonia M. Tudela met with WIA director Edith Deleon Guerrero at the council office in Chalan Kanoa yesterday to talk about helping find jobs for unemployed U.S. workers.

Camacho said last week's Agricultural Cooperative Training at the Fiesta Resort & Spa in Garapan prompted him to organize Tuesday's meeting, which saw over a dozen U.S. workers looking for jobs.

He said the council is seeking support from local businesses that could provide job opportunities for these workers.

Camacho noted that many of the business owners he has met expressed several concerns and issues in employing U.S. workers.

According to Camacho, the biggest concern among private companies when hiring U.S. workers is attendance as these workers fail to report for work as expected.

"They don't want to contin-



U.S. workers flank officials of the Saipan & Northern Islands Municipal Council and Workforce Investment Agency following their meeting at the council office in Chalan Kanoa on Tuesday.

ue spending money by hiring people who do not show up to work," he said.

Camacho urged yesterday's job seekers to prove these businesses wrong.

"I want to see a commitment from all of you," he said, adding that U.S. workers should possess loyalty, integrity, and honesty—the three keys to becoming successful in their jobs.

WIA's Deleon Guerrero,

for her part, said U.S. workers looking for jobs should be able to demonstrate that they have the passion, commitment, and willingness to perform their duties and responsibilities.

"All of us have a future. The world is huge. Opportunities are there but it's all up to you," she said.

Deleon Guerrero said that many U.S. workers also fail to make a good first impression

among employers when applying for jobs since they show up for interviews unprepared or not properly dressed.

When hired, the same workers also exhibit attitudes that blame their employer or the society when they lose their jobs.

"Attitude is your greatest disability. Your first impression is your last impression," said Deleon Guerrero.

She said that WIA offers a

number of programs that could help U.S. workers looking for jobs, including on-the-job training, displaced homemaker, and dislocated worker programs.

Deleon Guerrero advised, though, that U.S. workers should have basic skills that would give them the advantage to get hired for job positions

available in the market. "Remember that for every job opportunity, there are hundreds out there lining up for it," she said.

For more information about WIA programs, visit the office at Bldg. 1215 on Capital Hill, call 664-1705/07/08/57, or email gov.wia@pticom.com.

CPA calls for review of pros, cons of a new Rota harbor

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Ports Authority does not oppose building a new harbor on Rota but it warned the government of the potential impact of the project once it fails to determine ahead of time its various pros and cons.

Ports authority executive director Edward Deleon Guerrero told *Saipan Tribune* that the result of a study commissioned by the government is critical to any decision on the project.

Engineering company Mofats & Nichol was recently selected by the CNMI government to conduct the Rota East Harbor feasibility study, which will determine if it is viable to develop another harbor on the island.

Both the Rota Legislative Delegation and the Rota municipal government are pushing for the building of a new harbor to accommodate bigger ships.

Deleon Guerrero described this feasibility study as the "right direction" for everyone to know if pushing through with the project is meritorious. "CPA is in support of that east harbor project provided they will do everything that is needed to be done."

"We welcome that feasibility because that's the right direction. This study will tell us what we don't know and what we need to know before a de-

cision is made. Because at the end of the day, when it comes to port of entry...it will all be under CPA," said Deleon Guerrero.

According to him, the area identified for the proposed east harbor is not CPA property but is public land. Once the new harbor is built, this has to be dedicated as a port of entry before it can be operated by the ports authority.

The CPA chief disclosed that the project, if found feasible, will be funded by the CIP monies. However, Deleon Guerrero pointed out that CPA must be a participant in the planning process as it will involve ports activities.

Rota's elected officials have tossed the idea of developing the east harbor due to the current challenges in shipping commodities and other supplies to Rota. The existing west harbor has limited capability in its channel and cannot accommodate vessels longer than 235 feet.

The only way for the port to be able to accommodate bigger vessels is by widening its channel opening, which will require \$15 million, according to a study conducted by ports authority.

Ships going to Rota currently use the west harbor, which CPA officials earlier described as somewhat "calmer" and "more sheltered" compared to the east side of the island.



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Coastal Resources Management

Caller Box 10007, Behind Department of Public Safety
Bureau of Motor Vehicle, Susupe, Saipan MP 96950
TEL. NO. 664-8300 • FAX NO. 664-8315



NOTICE OF APPLICATION

March 06, 2013

THE FOLLOWING IS A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF COASTAL PERMIT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE CRM OFFICES:

APPLICANT	DATE APPLICATION RECEIVED	APPLICATION PROJECT DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	TYPE	STATUS
1. Saipan Sunset Cruise	11/19/2012 SPIm-2012-X-071	Dry Dock	Lower Base	Ports & Industrial APC	Approved (11/30/2012)*
2. YM Micronesia Inc.	11/26/2012 STRS/LRm-2012-X-072	Photographic Activities	Shoreline Areas	Shoreline APC	Approved (11/30/2012)*
3. Fiesta Resort & SPA	11/27/2012 SSm-2012-X-073	Temporary Beach Activities	Shoreline Areas	Shoreline APC	Approved (12/05/2012)*
4. Saipan World Resort	11/30/2012 SMS-2004-X-121(A)	Power Lines	Susupe	Amendment	Approved (12/12/2012)*
5. Dept of Public Land	12/17/2012 SLRm-2012-X-074	Pavilion Renovation	Managaha	Lagoon & Reef APC	Approved (01/16/2013)*
6. Saipan TV Production	12/26/2012 SSm-2012-X-075	Photographic Activities	Shoreline Areas	Shoreline APC	Approved (12/28/2012)*
7. Pacific Island Club	12/28/2012 SMS-91-X-25(A)	Barbeque Pavilion Extension	San Antonio	Amendment	Approved (01/24/2013)*
9. Saipan Sunset Cruise, Inc.	01/03/2013 SLRm-2013-X-001	In-Water Vessel Maintenance	Lagoon & Reef Areas	Lagoon & Reef APC	Approved (01/07/2013)*
10. DCCA	01/03/2013 SSm-2013-X-002	32nd Flame Tree Festival	Civic Center	Shoreline APC	Under Review
11. Good Day Coordinating	01/03/2013 SSm-2013-X-003	Photographic Activities	Shoreline Areas	Shoreline APC	Approved (01/08/2013)*
12. YM Micronesia Inc	01/07/2013 S/T/RLRm-2013-X-004	Photographic Activities	SPN,TIQ,Rota & Managaha	Shoreline & Lagoon & Reef APC	Approved (01/08/2013)*
13. Aquaville, Inc	01/07/2013 SLRm-2013-X-005	Snorkeling Tour	Lagoon & Reef	Lagoon & Reef APC	Approved (03/04/2013)*
14. Aquaville Inc	01/07/2013 SRLm-2013-X-006	Banana boat/Managaha Transfer	Lagoon & Reef	Lagoon & Reef APC	Approved (03/04/2013)*
15. Saipan Sea Ventures, Inc.	01/08/2013 SPIm-2013-X-007	Dry Dock	South Sea Plane	Ports & Industrial APC	Approved (02/01/2013)*
16. Shigeru Tomita	01/23/2013 SLRm-2013-X-008	Windsurfing Regatta	Micro Beach	Lagoon & Reef	Approved (02/01/2013)*
17. Mr. Choi In Sun	01/31/2013 SSm-2013-X-009	Commercial Building	Garapan	Shoreline APC	Under Review

Publication of the above list is in accordance with CRM Regulations, which require all permit applications to be published in a local newspaper within 15 days of receipt of application. The list reflects recently received permit applications and those with a recent change in status. New applications are marked with an asterisk (*).

The Public is invited to submit written comments regarding any of the above projects for which a permit decision has not been issued. All permit comments should identify the project by application number. Your comments should be mailed or hand-delivered to the CRM Office. All persons who desire a public hearing regarding any project may do so by submitting a written request for a public hearing to the CRM Office within fourteen (14) days for minor permits (APC's) and proposed amended major sitings. Public Hearings are required for all new major siting projects. All public hearing notices are published in a local newspaper of general circulation. Residents of Rota and Tinian may submit comments and hearing requests to their local CRM Coordinator. Persons wishing to retain the right to appeal a CRM Permit decision must file a notice of appeal with the CRM office within thirty (30) days of the issuance of the CRM permit decision as provided in Part 200 § 15-10-235 of the CRM Regulations.

Fire hits new recycling center in Lower Base

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Fire hit the compound of a newly opened recycling center in Lower Base, affecting about 200 junk

cars early Monday morning. Nobody was reported injured as no one was in the compound at the time. Jae Guk Yoon, 53, owner of FSM Recycling Saipan Inc.,

told reporters yesterday that he believes that the fire was intentionally set off. Yoon said the blaze began at 1am, but it was already 5am when he learned about the inci-

dent after his friend called him. Yoon suspects that the fire began near the main gate after someone apparently threw gasoline. The blaze spread into a long pile of junk vehicles, triggering

some explosions when the fire hit the gas tanks. The fire also engulfed six pine trees. Yoon said the center was just opened on Jan. 5, 2013, and that

its grand opening will be on March 15, 2013. The businessman said he has no idea on who may be responsible for the fire. Copper and other metals from junk vehicles are recycled for shipment to Hong Kong and South Korea.

Rotary to host its first Pacific Hold'em Tournament

By **CLARISSA V. DAVID**
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Rotary Club of Saipan is set to bring big-time poker action to the island when it hosts the first ever 2013 Pacific Hold'em Tournament next month.

Club vice president Laila Boyer revealed preliminary details about the upcoming event, highlighting one of the most popular forms of poker during their weekly meeting at the Hyatt Regency Saipan yesterday.

Boyer said the tournament, slated for April 20, is unprecedented in the history of poker in the CNMI and the entire region.

The venue for the event will be announced in coming days once it is finalized.

"If it becomes as successful as we hope it would be, then we will be able to continue it on an annual basis," Boyer told Rotarians, adding that the fundrais-

ing event is targeted to rake in \$30,000, which would be used to finance the various community projects of the organization.

Boyer said the 2013 Pacific Hold'em Tournament, which will have a \$200 buy-in per player, is expected to attract 150 poker players not only from the Northern Marianas but also other areas in the region such as Guam and Japan.

She noted that when she recently attended the Rotary district conference, Rotarians from Japan have already expressed interest flying to the CNMI to support the event.

Boyer said that tournament players will be narrowed down to the final nine tables, from which the champion will be selected.

"Only with the final table that we'll have professional dealers from Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino come in," she added. The tournament champion

will win the \$12,000 prize pool and the 2013 Pacific Hold'em Champion bracelet, which will feature the craftsmanship and elements that symbolize the region, said Boyer.

She acknowledged the Rotary Club of Northern Guam for providing them 17 cases of poker chips, cards, and professional timers that will be used during the event.

According to Boyer, the Northern Guam chapter should've been the first Rotary Club to host the first ever Texas Hold'em tournament in the region a year or two ago.

"Everything was set but they got shut down on the night of the event. Their board heard that we're hosting a tournament and they offered it at a very low price of \$700," she said.

Boyer said interested players may avail of the early registration through their website, www.saipanrotary.com, which will be-

come the tournament's official registration site where players can sign up by paying the buy-in through the site's PayPal feature.

The site will be launched soon, she added.

Boyer also recognized their partners for the event, which include Power 99, Marpac, Century Hotel, and Microl Toyota, which will offer a package deal for off-island players.

Rotary president Pete Shilling emphasized that the Pacific Hold'em Tournament will not be a substitute for the Las Vegas Night, Rotary Club of Saipan's annual signature fundraiser.

"In the next Rotary Year, between July and December, we



Rotary Club of Saipan president Pete Shilling, right, hands over a banner to visiting Rotarian Yohichi Kanazawa of the Odata Chuo Rotary Club in Akita Prefecture, Japan. Kanazawa, who first visited the CNMI in 1975, has been returning as a regular visitor ever since.

anticipate to have the Las Vegas Night as well so we'll be carrying on two large events each year hopefully," he said. For more information, email saipanrotary@gmail.com.

Early start for today's Chamber meeting

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce will host its monthly general membership luncheon meeting at the Saipan World Resort today, March 6, 2013. Luncheon will be served at 11am, and the meeting will begin at 11:30am, not the usual 12pm.

Gov. Eloy S. Inos accepted the Chamber's request to speak to the business community and will be the guest speaker. Meeting commences at 11:30am so as to give Inos ample opportunity to deliver his remarks.

In general, Inos will be discussing current economic challenges and how the administration intends to address them. He will also discuss, among other issues, the financial outlook of the CNMI government, the idea of extending the transition period for CW workers, and the

issue of minimum wage. The Northern Marianas College will also provide valuable information concerning the newly established relationship between NMC and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. Luncheon is \$20 for Chamber members and \$30 for guests and the public. Call the Chamber office at 233-7150 for reservation, or contact coordinator@saipan-chamber.com. (SCC)

NMHC eyes changes in QAP plan

By **CLARISSA V. DAVID**
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Northern Marianas Housing Corp. wants to make some changes to its Qualified Allocation Plan for the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program.

QAP details the selection criteria and application requirements for housing tax credits and tax-exempt bonds and lists all deadlines, application fees, restrictions, and standards.

Usually adopted each year, a QAP helps determine housing priorities and give preference to projects serving the lowest income tenants and projects obligated to serve qualified tenants for the longest periods.

The draft for the 2013 and 2014 QAP was presented to the board before it was opened for public comments, the deadline for which was Feb. 28.

Among the changes that NMHC wants in its QAP is to make it a two-year plan instead of the previous one-year effectivity.

Corporate director Jesse Palacios said in an interview that having a QAP approved for a two-year period means they don't have to go through the review, comment, and approval process each year.

Palacios said that the two-year plan would only be revisited and amended if there are any changes within the covered period, as called for by federal requirements.

He noted that a two-year QAP is done by Hawaii, after which the NMHC's plan is patterned.

Another change in the QAP is adding Energy Efficiency and Green Building as one of the criteria.

"Whatever project is coming up, if they address energy efficiency, then they get more

points," said Palacios.

He also wanted to make it clear in the 2013-2014 QAP that only organizations classified as tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code can participate in the federal LIHTC program.

"It wasn't really clear in the last QAP," he said.

Palacios pointed out that they added another section under compliance and monitoring, which would allow NMHC to investigate if it receives complaints about the project or if there is a perceived violation of the program. This means the

agency won't have to wait for its schedule of annual inspection or monitoring before initiating the investigation.

"We'd like to address matters as they appear," Palacios told *Saipan Tribune*.

Board chair Marcie Tomokane recommended that the agency specify in the plan that all fees associated with the LIHTC application are nonrefundable.

Should there be no public comments received for the final draft of the 2013-2014 QAP, it will be forwarded to the governor for his signature. In the event that there are any comments, the plan will have to be referred back to the NMHC board.

LAW OFFICES OF S. JOSHUA BERGER
D'Torres Building, Garapan
P.O. Box 504340
Saipan, MP 96950
Phone (670) 235-8060 Fax 235-8070

Attorney for Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN
MARIANA ISLANDS

NORTHERN MARIANA
ISLANDS RETIREMENT
FUND
Plaintiff,

vs.

VICENTE K. BASA
aka VINCENT K. BASA,
Defendant.

CIVIL
ACTION
NO.
09-0120

SUMMONS

TO: VICENTE K. BASA aka
VINCENT K. BASA

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file with the Superior Court any Answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is given to you herewith, within twenty-one (21) days after the fourth publication of this Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your Answer to the Law Offices of S. Joshua Berger, Plaintiff's attorney, whose address is Second Floor, D'Torres Building, Garapan, P. O. Box 504340, Saipan, MP 96950, as soon as practicable after filing your Answer.

Your Answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan. It may be prepared and signed for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice. If you fail to answer in accordance with this Summons, judgment by default may be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

By order of the above Court:

DATED, this 15th day of January, 2013

/s/ Clerk of Court 1st Publication

MEETING NOTICE

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 11, the Marianas Visitors Authority, hereby gives notice that a Special Board of Directors Meeting will be held on Thursday, March 7, 2013 at 9:00 a.m. at the MVA Conference Room San Jose Professional Building Saipan, MP 96950.

MEETING AGENDA

- 1) Preliminary Matters**
 1. Call to Order
 2. Roll Call
 3. Adoption of Agenda
- 2) Public Comments**
- 3) New Business**
 1. H.B. 18-4, regarding Managaha
 2. H.B. 18-2
 3. FY 2013 2nd half budget
- 4) Miscellaneous/Announcements**
- 5) Executive Session**
- 6) Adjournment**

/s/ Marian Aldan-Pierce
Chairperson, MVA Board of Directors

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP13-DPL-085**

SUBMISSION DATE: APRIL 02, 2013 • TIME: 10:00 A.M.

**"FINANCIAL AND COMPLIANCE AUDIT FOR FISCAL YEAR
ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2011 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30,
2012 FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS"**

THE COMPLETE SCOPE OF WORK FOR THIS PROJECT WILL BE AVAILABLE ON OR AFTER **FEBRUARY 27, 2013** AND MAY BE PICKED UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, LOWER BASE DRIVE DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

ALL **QUESTIONS** REGARDING THIS PROJECT MUST BE SUBMITTED IN WRITING BY EMAIL TO **PEDRO I. ITIBUS, ACTING SECRETARY OF PUBLIC LANDS** AT pete@dpl.gov.mp OR TO **MS. ROSALINDA J. AYUYU** AT rayuyu@dpl.gov.mp OR BY FAX TO (670) 234-3755 NO LATER THAN **4:30 P.M., LOCAL TIME, ON MARCH 19, 2013**.

THE COMMONWEALTH RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS AND PROPOSALS, IN WHOLE OR IN PART, AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTION IN A BID IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS. ALL BIDS SHALL BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/s/ PEDRO I. ITIBUS
ACTING SECRETARY OF PUBLIC LANDS

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, PROC. & SUPPLY

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS

CUC-IFB-13-016
**PROCUREMENT & INSTALLATION OF LED STREET LIGHTS
(Phase No. 3)**

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified and experienced firms for the procurement and installation of Light Emitting Diodes (LED) Street Lights on Saipan, Tinian and Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This project is funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

The Bid Package may be obtained, upon receipt of a non-refundable payment from the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card, in the amount of \$100.00 for one set; at the CUC, Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Dandan, Saipan, between 7:30 AM to 11:30 AM and 12:30 PM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays.

A Pre-Bid Conference will be held at 10:00 AM (ChST) on **March 14, 2013** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-IFB-13-016, Procurement and Installation of Light Emitting Diodes (LED) Street Lights" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on April 9, 2013** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before submission deadline. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualifications should be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

The bidder is required to submit a copy of his CNMI Business license in compliance with the Contractor's Registration and Licensing Laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The Contractor and all subcontractors will be obligated to pay wage rates not less than the current CNMI minimum wage, prevailing through the period of contract, as indicated in the web page—<http://www.dol.gov/esa/minwage/cnmi/cnmi.htm>. The contractor will also be required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws including the Davis Bacon Act.

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid or supply under the contract. The IFB does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the bid under this request, or to procure or contract for goods. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on **March 19, 2013** to Manny B. Sablan, Jr., CUC Purchasing Officer, via email manny.sablan@cuco.gov with a copy to Alfredo Palatiao, Power Division Engineer via email alfredo.palatiao@cuco.gov.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

ALAN W. FLETCHER
Acting Executive Director

10 mariners rescued at sea back in Palau

PHILIPPINE SEA—The U.S. Coast Guard, in coordination with the Republic of Palau Division of Maritime Law Enforcement and the Royal Australian Navy Maritime Surveillance Advisor, partnered to provide assistance to Palau, rescuing 10 mariners from the Philippine Sea, 90 nautical miles northeast of Palau.

The mariners in distress originated their voyage on a 60-foot traditional sailing canoe traveling from Palau to the outer islands of Yap State in the Federated States of Micronesia. The vessel had 10 crewmembers onboard, including students from the Palau Community College, as well as Palauan, Japanese, and U.S. citizens.

Using a satellite telephone, the canoe contacted officials at the college at 6:30am Chamorro Standard Time, on March 4, 2013, and indicated the vessel was breaking apart and sinking.

Palau Community College officials contacted the appropriate Palauan agencies in accordance with their National Search and Rescue Plan, who requested assistance from the U.S. Coast Guard in accordance with a long-standing memorandum of understanding under the Compact of Free Association.

The Coast Guard launched its 110-foot cutter *Washington* to assist in this case, and requested long-range aircraft support from



U.S. COAST GUARD

Crew members from the U.S. Coast Guard cutter *Washington* assist in the rescue of 10 mariners whose 60 foot traditional sailing canoe broke apart and sank in the waters 90 nautical miles northeast of the Republic of Palau on March 4, 2013. The survivors were located and recovered by the Panamanian flagged commercial vessel *Hyundai Unity* and transferred to the *Washington* for transport back to Palau.

the U.S. Navy's Combined Task Force 72, in Kadena, Japan. The Coast Guard also identified a commercial cargo vessel, the Panamanian-flagged vessel *Hyundai Unity*, transiting in the vicinity of the distress location, and contacted the vessel asking for their assistance. The vessel diverted from their

course and maneuvered toward the distress position.

The crew of the *Hyundai Unity* spotted the individuals at 11:32am ChST and began the process of recovering all of the crew members. The cutter *Washington* returned the mariners to Koror, Palau just before sunset Monday, March 4.

This successful response was greatly assisted by the foresight and planning of the vessel crew, who filed a detailed float plan prior to departing, and maintained a full suite of lifesaving equipment, including a satellite telephone and personal flotation devices for every person on board. (USCG)

CNMI WATER KIDS PRESENTATION

'Saving water for the future is our responsibility today'



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CNMI Water Kids presenters pose for a souvenir picture with the students and teachers.

ROTA—Here on Rota, our abundance of fresh water comes from a spring in the mountain called the Water Cave. It isn't easy to talk about the need to save water when you have an abundance of it. This abundance of water is really just another contradiction. We live on an island where dry seasons are common, yet we plant lush lawns and grow thirsty crops. Farm animals need water. Our population is growing and more water is needed. Water is not cheap. That is why it's important to conserve.

Conservation should come naturally. Yet it doesn't. The urge to conserve seems to fade. In the end, conserving water has little to do with dry season or not

paying for water and everything to do with protecting a limited resource. It is not about making sacrifices. It's about conserving. It's about saving our community's lifeblood for tomorrow.

Conserving water is something we do because we're a responsible Luta community.

The "CNMI Water Kids" is a 45-minute presentation exploring the natural resource of fresh water on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. This presentation educates and seeks the help of students in helping conserve water in their community.

"CNMI Water Kids" is a presentation of WERI, the Water and Environmental Resources Institute of the Western Pacific, University of Guam, with funding

from the U.S. Geological Survey.

The presentation was conducted by Phil and Ann Card, and consulting teacher Jennifer Berry. They showed multimedia presentation with animated segments geared to fifth- and sixth-grade levels. Students of all grade levels are welcome.

The presenters provided free teacher materials, including a CD copy of the slide show, two lesson plans with activities, word bank, quizzes, and a glossary of related terms in Chamorro.

There is also a companion website at www.cnmiwaterkids.com, where educators can download materials and where students can explore information about fresh water on their own.

The lesson plans are applica-

ble to Science, Language Arts, Social Studies, Chamorro Studies, Spelling, Vocabulary and Art for grades 3-7. Topics covered include the definition and importance of fresh water, the water cycle, ground water and surface water, how pollutants affect our fresh water, and what kids can do to protect and conserve the CNMI's freshwater.

"Conserving and protecting water can save thousands of dollars in our community," said seventh-grader Angelica Lucero.

The administration, faculty, staff, and students would like extend their appreciation to Phil and Ann Card, and Jennifer Berry for their worthwhile educational presentation. (Edward Maratita Jr.)

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Mar. 6, 2004

EMO: NMI assured of \$5.8M grant

Emergency Management Office director Rudolf Pua assured yesterday that the CNMI would receive the \$5.8 million homeland security grant for fiscal year 2004, allaying reported fears by emergency response officials that the grant may fall through. Pua said the grant is an appropriation by the U.S. Congress and is earmarked for the Commonwealth. "There may be issues that may [need to] be ironed out," Pua said. "But we are not going to lose that money." Pua said there were requirements that were previously not submitted. He said the visit by two officials from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Domestic Preparedness was "to assist [the CNMI] and ensure that our files are all in order and funds [are] obligated orderly."

FEMA funds for PSS available now

Funding aid from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for the repair of typhoon-damaged Rota public schools is now finally available, according to authorities. Board of Education member Marja Lee Taitano said FEMA will be shouldering 90 percent of the total amount, while the Public School System is responsible for the remaining 10 percent. She said PSS is now poised to go ahead with bidding procedures such as for architectural and engineering design. The PSS earlier submitted a \$2.1-million funding request to FEMA for damages sustained by Rota schools in the December 2002 supertyphoon Pongsona.

Mar. 6, 2005

Kagman farms beset with water woes

The water supply to commercial farm plots in Kagman has become problematic as three of the five wells providing water to the area are down. Also, initial inspection showed that there is a problem with the water piping system. The administration assured, though, that the CNMI Water Task Force is already addressing the water crisis affecting the area. "We've made it a priority. We're addressing it and the task force is looking into the possibility of doing a study that would change the design so that farmers will have adequate water," according to acting Gov. Diego T. Benavente yesterday.

'Babauta admin not proactive on garment industry'

"Too little, too late." This is how the Covenant Party of the Northern Marianas characterizes the Babauta administration's belated attempt to do something about the garment industry's diminished competitiveness in the wake of the new World Trade Organization rules coming into effect. After at least two companies have already folded, the Babauta administration recently announced the formation of a "fact-finding committee" that would evaluate the financial impact of the industry's expected reductions. "Business people knew about this years ago," said Martin Manglona, chair of the Marianas Covenant Party.

Mar. 6, 2006

'Spare NMC from budget cuts'

The House minority bloc has warned the administration of the possibility that budget cuts may result in closure of the Northern Marianas College's Rota and Tinian campuses. The minority members, led by Rep. Arnold I. Palacios, said this in a resolution asking the governor to spare the college from the budget cuts being implemented against all government agencies. According to the resolution, the administration's budget reduction analysis proposes to cut NMC's FY 2006 continuing resolution budget level of \$8 million by 20- to 48- percent. Antonio Muna, the governor's special assistant for management and budget, said Friday that all agencies were facing an 18.78-percent budget reduction across the board.

New DPS chief: Boosting morale is top agenda

The new commissioner of the Department of Public Safety has put in on his top agenda to boost the morale of local law enforcers. Barely a week in office, acting DPS Commissioner Ernest Williams said he planned to focus on morale issues in his few weeks as the new head of the department, which he observed employed a lot of hardworking people. "People always work with you if they know that you work with them and support them. I just want to assure them that I support them in everything they do," Williams said. He added that he planned to spend the next 30 to 60 days evaluating the overall police organization and assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the existing system.

Library's ukulele classes proving to be a popular draw

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Ukulele classes are proving to be one of the more popular programs at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, according to Erlinda Naputi.

Naputi, coordinator at the JKPL Children of Our Homeland Center, said yesterday that they have 38 students who are enrolled in the after-school ukulele class for beginners conducted by musician Larry Lee.

Of this number, six are adults and the rest are children ranging from 8 years old to teens.

Naputi disclosed that they initially got 40 students, the maximum number they can accommodate for the class. However, two students were unable to continue with the lessons.

She said this year's registration had a "really good turnout" compared to 2012, in which they had 31 students. Naputi noted that even after classes began on Feb. 7, they were still receiving calls from parents who wanted their children to learn how to play the instrument.

"Majority of the students were just enrolled by their parents so they were reluctant at first. They thought it was going to be difficult but they're really enjoying it now," she told *Saipan Tribune*.

According to Naputi, the students learn the parts of a ukulele, the proper way of holding it, strumming, and keys. They also learn to play new songs each week.

Besides the beginners' class, JKPL also offers an intermediate class for those who have already completed the beginners' class.

The intermediate class is conducted by various ukulele instructors.

Both the intermediate and beginners' classes will run until March 28. Prior to the last day of classes, Naputi said the students will showcase their ukulele skills in a public presentation to be held at JKPL.

With the continued interest in ukulele lessons among library patrons, Naputi is optimistic that the state library can also carry on with its partnership with Lee and other ukulele players on island to educate the public about the instrument.

"We want to thank all our instructors and the community for showing interest in our ukulele classes. Without them, we won't have this program," said Naputi.

For more information about the library programs, visit JKPL in Susupe or call 235-7316/22/23 or fax 235-7550.



Ukulele class instructor Larry Lee shows intermediate students how to play their instrument.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Aspiring ukulele players listen to their instructor during one of the sessions of the after-school class for beginners offered by the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library in Susupe.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Students under the intermediate ukulele class show off their musical skills during a session at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Students under the ukulele class at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library are seen playing with their instrument and applying their lessons while parents and guardians look on.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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We need new ideas for job creation

By ANNE MICHAUD
Newsday*Anne Michaud is interactive editor for Newsday Opinion and a member of the Newsday editorial board. Her email address is anne.michaud@newsday.com.*

I don't know how often Republican members of the House of Representatives use quotes from President Barack Obama in their slideshows. Given the caustic partisan scene in Washington, it's probably rare.

But on Tuesday morning, Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC), who chairs the Higher Education and Workforce Training Subcommittee, included a promise from the president's 2012 State of the Union address as she rolled out hearings on her job-training bill.

"I want to cut through the maze of confusing training programs, so that from now on, [job seekers] have one program, one website, and one place to go for all the information and help that they need. It is time to turn our unemployment system into a re-employment system that puts people to work," the president said on Jan. 24, 2012.

Foxx then declared, matter-of-factly, that her SKILLS Act—short for Supporting Knowledge and Investing in Lifelong Skills—is "the only proposal that moves us toward the president's goal." She looked around the meeting room. "We had a quote up there a second ago, and I hope everyone had a chance to see it."

It was good political theater—diplomatic and pointed—and I hope it works. The jobs crisis in this country is entering its fifth year, and notwithstanding the president's statement, the Obama administration has focused too little on expanding opportunities for people to work.

Foxx's bill, by contrast, could bring some much-needed reform. Though her delivery was subdued, the facts she cited were startling. The federal government is spending \$18 billion a year on employment and training services. That's a lot of money. There are more than 50 programs, spread across nine federal agencies.

About 2 million people have managed to find their way through this maze to enter a federal program, according to Foxx, yet only a pitiful 14 percent finished the instruction. And less than half of those who received employment assistance—resume writing or job searches—found work.

It makes you wonder what we're getting for that \$18 billion. That's like building five new Tappan Zee bridges each year. If we spent the money on bridges like that instead, at least we'd get about 16,000 jobs per bridge out of it.

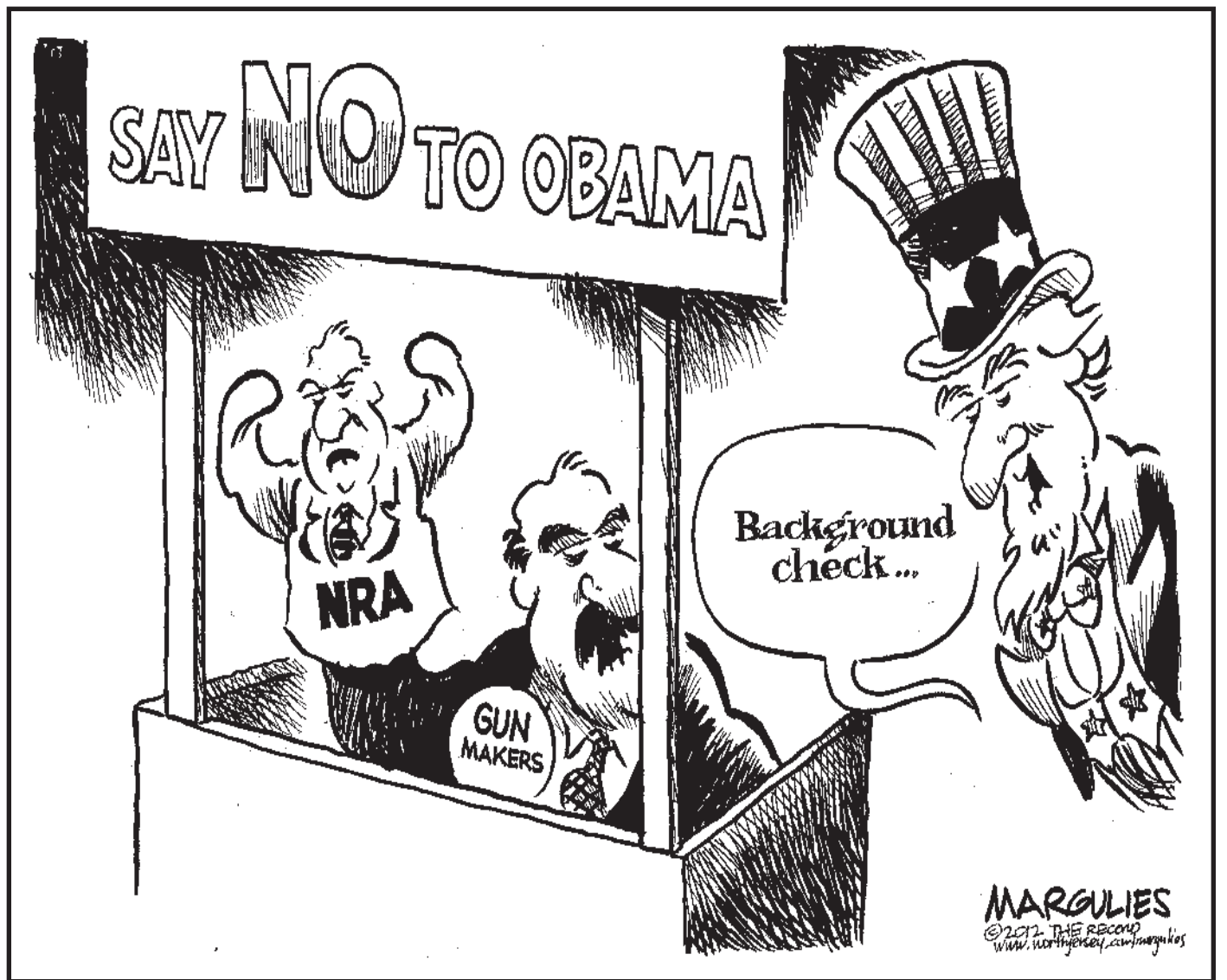
Foxx's SKILLS Act would eliminate 35 ineffective and redundant programs in favor of a one-stop workforce investment fund.

It would give more flexibility to regional workforce investment boards, which are responsible for policies and oversight of the programs, and require two-thirds of the board members to be employers. That makes unions nervous, but we have to do more for the estimated 13 million people out of work, and 8 million part-time workers who want more hours.

To date, the workforce investment boards, which were created in 1998, have followed 19 federal mandates about who can serve—leading to "large, unmanageable and unengaged boards," according to Todd Gustafson, executive director of Southwestern Michigan's workforce investment board. That can make it hard to recruit good people for the boards, he told Foxx's subcommittee on Tuesday.

More dynamic, locally focused employment boards could make better use of that \$18 billion. When you have 7.1 percent unem-

See JOB on Next Page



February's firestorms

My son-in-law, married to my Canadian daughter, teaches at Kapiolani Community College in Honolulu while pursuing a PoliSci doctorate at UH-Manoa. Both steeped in academic life, they managed while I vacationed in Hawaii to keep us connected in our mind to the realities of the university. We were mentally connected to where we teach here in Shenyang Aerospace University.

We returned on campus on the tail end of the Spring Festival, aka Lunar New Year. Our students were still at home, unless they live in the south or far west, in which case they would have trekked back in time for the spring semester opening at the end of the month.

We had a day of peace and quiet when I returned last week of February until two days later when a deluge of humanity hit our school. Our erstwhile sedate residence of foreign personnel suddenly turned into a speaking of tongues as our foreign students returned from trips around the country, or for the better off, from a trip to their home.

The fire in our belly is in our pedagogical challenge to confront each of our students with questions of personal identity, vocation, and lifestyle while learning the intricacies of a second language. English is the subject but the reality of life in all its authenticity *sans* illusions is the attempted overarching context.

Of course, the firestorm on Saipan had to be the governor's impeachment by the Legislature that eventually resulted in Benigno R. Fitial's resignation. Hardly benign even in his exit for California the day after, the former governor was feisty in offering a rationale for taking permanent leave to deal with health issues. This was hardly satisfying to the smoldering heat of vengeance among those who experienced the governor's watch as arrogant! No matter. Yesterday is best left to burn out of its own embers.

President Obama raised his own firestorm in his State of the Union address as he laid out a comprehensive program for his last term in office. It is not going to be a laidback affair, allowing the invisible hand of the marketplace manipulated by vested interests, to set trends. He intends to steer the course of the nation with or without the assistance of the not-so-loyal opposition, encouraging a vociferous involvement of ordinary citizens. This fire did not sit well in the belly of even accommodating GOP colleagues!

Firestorm as a metaphor is not a laughing matter Down Under. Three years ago, the hillsides on the southern east coast burned with the flames of uncontrollable bushfires. Having been present at sporadic instances more than a decade ago when we felt the heat accompanied by high anxiety from friends whose livestock and livelihood were at stake in the tinder box of dry air around Sydney town, we do not tread lightly on this path. This year, Tasmania and Western Australia got the brunt of the previous two years of *La Nina*

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune*Jaime R. Vergara (jrvergara2031@aol.com) is a former PSS teacher and is currently writing from the campus of Shenyang Aerospace University in China.*

weather that left dry swaths of grasslands.

With Daniel Day Lewis in the movie *Lincoln* getting the Oscar nod for best actor, we recall how 150 years ago, the assassinated President deftly guided legislation to make his executive proclamation of the emancipation of slaves into the abolition of slavery a matter of constitutional law. That was one firestorm that was costly, sending the lanky log-splitter into the saintly rank of martyrs.

February also saw the dramatic fall of Jesse Jackson Jr. of our own Chicago town from his congressional perch after being indicted, and pleading guilty, to mail and wire fraud in a negotiated settlement over his alleged misappropriation of campaign funds for personal use. Though we hesitate to condemn a fellow wayfarer, we cannot condone the crime, bipolar disorder claims notwithstanding.

Italy's Mt. Etna's dramatic lava flow offers a respite from our anxieties over the effects of climate warming bedeviling locations around the world. We suffer from a dab of hypocrisy knowing that we live in a place where coal is king, burned to provide us the ease of electric lights and cooking range, the comfort of refrigeration and potable hot water! The carbon in the atmosphere is not confined to our immediate environ; it affects the polar caps' melting, adding not only to the rising waters of our oceans but also to the weight on our tectonic plates that is causing a few tremors into our already shaken lives.

We won't even go to the Russians' worry about asteroids this year.

It is the heat of employment uncertainties that grabs our students' attention these days as China reels from a lower growth rate previously fueled by exports, to an economy shifted to domestic spending, with inflation affecting food costs, and the presence of a university certificate no longer a guarantee of a secure job awaiting outside academe. Like their counterparts in the West, students are finding more reason to extend university time in the hope that a master's degree will favor their employability!

The firestorms of our lives is on that state when we refuse to live the promise of what is given, and long for that which is no longer, on the one hand, or that which is not yet, on the other.

So our classes begin again. "This is the day we have. We can live this day, or, throw it away. This is the day we have!"

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Blossoming of family fundraisers

You probably have bought tickets or participated in food preparation for families fundraising to help loved ones slated to go to off-island medical centers.

We use the forte of our community to rally behind this necessity while the patient waits for collection that would cover such expenses as airfare, food, and lodging.

It isn't hard discerning why the voluntary family fundraisers. It shows what happens in a listless economy where the government is basically bankrupt coupled by the inability of families to deal with the tertiary cost of critical health conditions.

What's at issue in this phenomenon? We have a very sick local population that is seemingly reluctant to voluntarily change its health habits.

Admittedly, it's hard making shifts once a person adopts the couch potato culture. Over the long haul, we see more cases of Type II diabetes and serious ailments associated with it and heart issues.

As we move into the future, there's the inherent fear that more families will be dealing with catastrophic and long-term critical health issues. This places a heavier burden on the scarcity of local resources for off-island referral purposes. Thus the voluntary help of families to help patients waiting for airfare, etc.

At the risk of redundancy, health begins with the self and how true

that you are what you eat and do throughout the course of the day. With what's available at our disposal for instant consumption, more often than not we respond to the demands of our tummy over the use of our brains to decide whether to chuck down a can of sugar-loaded soda pop or water. A lot revolves around personal discipline.

Yes, I've heard people spout that it's the doctor's responsibility to help keep us healthy and alive. No sir! It begins with you! A doctor in the ER could only do what's medically possible to see that you recover. He can't do anything to a permanently damaged heart muscle. It's irresponsible too to expect him to employ divine powers that are solely the purview of the man upstairs.

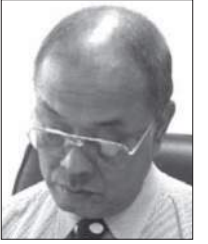
Public education on preventive healthcare has begun. It pays to listen and practice what it encourages you to do. Make healthy activities a family thing. Difficult the change may be, it pays handsomely over the long haul. Too, walking around in a healthy you is a million times better than a medical fix like a successful heart bypass surgery. God-given health is never the same even with the use of the most advanced medical technology available. Stick with the original you by staying healthy!

Significant reduction in revenue

Is there a magical solution to the significant reduction in annual rev-

By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.

Special to the Saipan Tribune



John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands.

enues for the NMI? How would leadership deal with this decrease and scarcity? Would it be bold decisions or the usual swerve job, ignoring the obvious that requires reduction in force?

It's widely known that corruption or complicity and redundancy exist at every level of government. It forces the question: Is leadership equipped with the wisdom and resolve to cut spending given the consistent slide in annual revenues? With significant reduction in revenues, does the NMI really need all 4,000 employees to run a woefully bloated government?

Amidst the deepening hardship, it seems government employees are treated like royal misfits expecting an annual salary, health insurance, pension, sick and annual leave, government cars, and overtime pay, half of which is spent in coffee shops in the morning. Yet their services haven't gone past mediocrity level to satisfy taxpayers' expectations. But taxpayers fork out backbreaking biweekly loot for the royal misfits in the public sector.

A reduction in force is mandatory. There isn't much that can be done with \$22 million earmarked for other essential government services. Spreading it doesn't do justice either. Isn't it true that PSS needs some \$40 million to make up the effects of cuts from the Obama sequestration? Isn't CHC in need of operations funds to the tune of \$38 million? Spending cuts is mandatory!

Health Insurance

The economic disaster at home has forced matriarchs and patriarchs to cancel health insurance policies, given the whirlwind of hardship where every penny counts.

I've dealt with medical emergencies involving families and friends who are caught in a bind for discontinuing health policies. It's a difficult situation for both the local government and the afflicted family. What must we do in the meantime?

Health cost is the single most financially draining item in any budget other than political excesses piled upon the soon-to-die Retirement Fund. Interesting that in both cases (especially the latter) politicians have failed to resolve the issue for 35 years. Each has pitched his baseless solution by telling us why we must listen to them for *all* the wrong or half-cocked pontifications.

Meanwhile, there's the factual phenomenon that the indigenous population is woefully sick from poor health habits. Don't blame health professionals for they could only do so much. But we can turn the issue inward—to the *self*—where everything starts. You want to stay healthy and not deal with long-term or catastrophic illnesses as you enter your golden years? Start today by adopting healthy habits.

Sugar and fat are famous for the gradual destruction of health. Sugar comes in the form of white rice, white bread, myriad of drinks, candies, doughnuts, etc. Fat or oil is found in fried and stir-fried food, the famous fritada, and heavily salted food, etc. When coupled with a sedentary lifestyle, you're on the march to bouts with heart problems, kidney failure, etc. Either you voluntarily make major shifts now in food consumption and physical exercise or sing yourself to your own rendition of *Gold Mine in the Skies*.

Sorry, don't mean to blow the lid but it takes straight talk to get this mess domesticated so we begin a steady march toward greater health for the sickly indigenous folks.

JOB

From Page 10

ployment on Long Island, and an executive of the North Shore-LIJ Health System writing that he's unable to fill high-skills jobs, as he did on these pages in January, you know that some puzzle pieces are missing.

The SKILLS Act would also give local boards freedom to contract directly with community colleges—important players on Long Island—to provide training for large groups.

We shouldn't allow these good ideas to sink under the weight of partisanship. As Foxx made quite clear this week, we all agree on the goal.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Time for the CNMI to prosper

With the swearing in of Gov. Eloy S. Inos and Lt. Gov. Jude U. Hofschneider, I am very confident that with their experience and responsiveness they can return the CNMI to prosperity and economic sustainability. I have faith in their leadership to bring trust and closeness to the people of the CNMI as a whole. I am pretty sure that with the new administration, some investors might be interested to come back to the CNMI. Tourism will prosper as well. The focal point here is to entice resort investment and tourism industry into our region. Tourism and resort investment are the primary industry that will bring substantial revenue to the coffers of the CNMI.

Without additional revenues, it will be difficult to help the ailing Retirement Fund, health services and medical referral as well as our utility services. We must look positively and not hurt our retirees by cutting their benefits, hurt our hospital staff through layoffs and cut premium pay of CUC and DPS personnel.

Perhaps the Legislature can revisit the Article 12 provision in the CNMI Constitution. Article 12 is one of the factors affecting potential investors from coming to the CNMI. I wholeheartedly support the movement of concerned citizens to put a legislative initiative before the general election in order for people of the CNMI to make a wise decision whether to repeal or retain the Article 12 provision. I, for one, want Article 12 to be repealed. Article 12 creates a lot of uncertainties for potential investors. Some investors lost hope and left the CNMI because they have no future security and prospect of maintaining their investment as a result of the Article 12 restriction.

Moreover, I am hoping that Gov. Inos will establish a good and

close relationship with the federal government. I urge Gov. Inos and Delegate Gregorio Kilili Sablan to revisit the SNAP (Standard Nutrition Assistance Program). Perhaps, such a program can be implemented to replace the old food stamp program so that it can benefit more of our people in need of such assistance and at the same time bring economic benefit to the CNMI.

Infrastructures improvement through Capital Improvement Project funds and Federal Highway grants could also spur economic benefits for the construction business in the CNMI. There are many other federal grants that could positively assist in bringing economic growth to the CNMI. I am very certain that the new administration and the Legislature could work forward with Congressman Kilili in pursuing federal grants assistance for the CNMI. Although there might be a cut in federal spending, I urge our leaders not to lose hope and continue to work with the federal government in getting whatever grants are available for the CNMI.

With the recurring problems in the CNMI, it is a tough and challenging task ahead for Gov. Inos and Lt. Gov. Hofschneider as they begin their transition and I humbly support their administration's move in appointing serious and competent individuals to manage government departments as well as boards and commissions so that our people can be assisted well. Our people have suffered enough and I wish the best of luck and success to all our leaders in their endeavor to restore the people's confidence and economic recovery.

Rufo C. Maratita

Sinapalo I, Rota

The VFW needs your help

Most people on Saipan are well aware of the VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars), if only through its former canteen on Beach Road. Few are aware of what we do.

Our primary goal is to help veterans. Our motto is, "No one Does More For Veterans Than the VFW." We also strive to help the community in which we live.

On a personal note, I served in Vietnam with the 5th Marine Regiment in the late '60s. I was a grunt, and carried an M60 machine gun for 13 months. This adventure had a profound affect on my life, most notably when it came to dealing with other people. It took me 30 years to realize I had a problem. That problem is now called PTSD, and wasn't discovered until the mid '70s.

This condition is primarily seen in combat veterans, to include those that have served in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, etc., etc. No one is immune.

The gunshot/shrapnel wounds heal in time. PTSD never does, although with care it can be managed.

Fortunately we can turn to the VFW, and the VA Administration for help.

The VFW is a non-profit organization with the one goal of helping veterans and their families.

The VA is a government organization with essentially the same goal plus many, many government medical services. All of these services are directed at providing medical care for veterans.

The VFW has been instrumental in getting me, and others like me, the medical care we need.

That care is supplied by the VA Clinic here on Saipan. Thank you, Ruth Coleman.

If you know anyone who has been in a foreign war, they would benefit from the camaraderie of the VFW, and probably from VA supplied medical care.

Our canteen also serves as a meeting place for sailors from visiting ships.

Toward this end the Saipan VFW is in the process of building a new Post Home/Canteen. Please help us to help our veterans. Open up your hearts and your wallets and give whatever you can to help us in meeting our building goals. Every donation is appreciated and helps the veterans that you know and love.






Ed Tudor, DVM

*Post Commander Saipan, VFW 3457
Sadog Tasi, Saipan*

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
				
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲ 86° ▼ 76°	▲ 86° ▼ 76°	▲ 86° ▼ 76°	▲ 86° ▼ 76°	▲ 86° ▼ 76°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	▲ 85 ▼ 77
Palau	Showers	▲ 86 ▼ 76
Yap	Showers	▲ 88 ▼ 77
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	▲ 85 ▼ 80
Pohnpei	Showers	▲ 86 ▼ 79
Kosrae	Showers	▲ 86 ▼ 79
Majuro	Mostly Sunny	▲ 86 ▼ 80

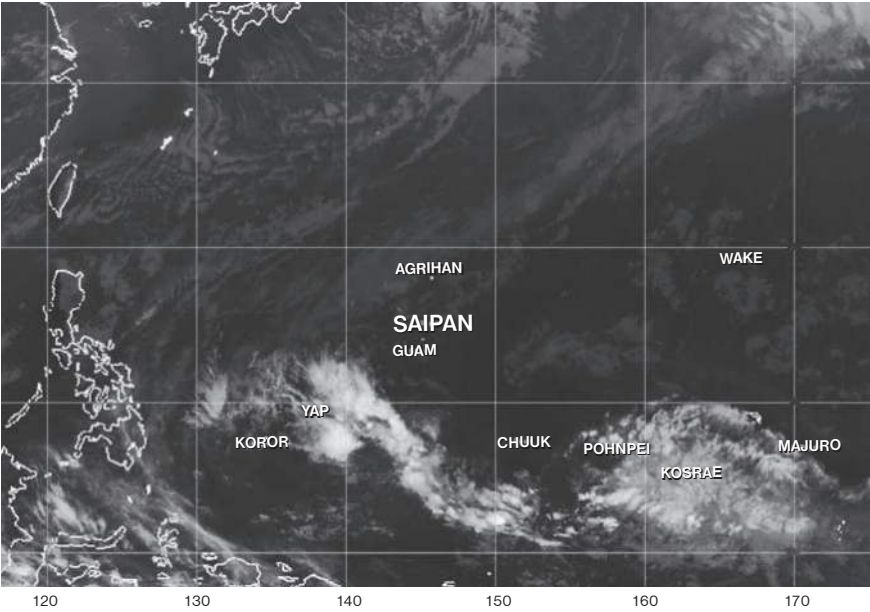
Around The Globe

Auckland	Partly Cloudy	▲ 75 ▼ 66
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	▲ 67 ▼ 33
Hong Kong	Sunny	▲ 72 ▼ 64
Honolulu	Sunny	▲ 82 ▼ 70
London	Cloudy	▲ 54 ▼ 46
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	▲ 60 ▼ 48
Manila	Partly Cloudy	▲ 88 ▼ 77
Melbourne	Sunny	▲ 86 ▼ 67
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲ 79 ▼ 49
New York	Ice	▲ 39 ▼ 31
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	▲ 64 ▼ 45
Paris	Cloudy	▲ 57 ▼ 44
Pusan	Windy	▲ 64 ▼ 48
Rome	Rain	▲ 60 ▼ 54
Salem	Showers	▲ 48 ▼ 38
San Francisco	Showers	▲ 56 ▼ 45
Seoul	Showers	▲ 55 ▼ 41
Tokyo	Sunny	▲ 66 ▼ 43
Washington, DC	Ice	▲ 38 ▼ 36

Tides

Saipan Harbor				
3:38 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.6 Feet	
8:27 AM	Today	Low Tide:	1.2 Feet	
1:38 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet	
9:27 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.1 Feet	

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 2013
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front enters the discussion area near 25N158E and extends to 21N150E then continues as a shear line west of the Marianas to 13N138E. Cloudiness and patchy rain are seen along and up to 250 miles northwest of this boundary. A near-equatorial trough extends from near 2N130E to 3N140E to EQ152E. A surface trough stretches north of the equatorial trough from 6N142E to 12N140E. Convergence associated with these two troughs is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms near Yap between 6N and 11N from 138E to 145E and southwest of Chuuk within 120 miles of a line that extends from 6N144E to 1N152E. A trade-wind disturbance is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms over Pohnpei and Kosrae states between the equator and 9N from 157E to 171E.

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:31 AM	6:26 PM
Thursday	6:30 AM	6:26 PM
Friday	6:30 AM	6:26 PM
Saturday	6:29 AM	6:26 PM
Sunday	6:28 AM	6:26 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	1:25 AM	1:05 PM
Thursday	2:21 AM	2:05 PM
Friday	3:15 AM	3:05 PM
Saturday	4:06 AM	4:03 PM
Sunday	4:53 AM	4:59 PM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMUT SARI
Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS

- Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

- For pictures:**
- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
 - Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
 - Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
 - Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
 - For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.
- For announcements:**
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when),

- the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEB. 5, 2013

DEPARTURES	ARRIVALS
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM) UA5070 4:35am 5:25am 2, 4, 6, 7 UA5062 4:40am 5:30am 1, 3, 5 UA5068 8:25am 9:15am Daily UA5074 11:10am 12:00pm 1, 4, 5, 7 UA5076 3:10pm 4:00pm Daily UA5078 6:55pm 7:45pm Daily UA5072 9:45pm 10:35pm Daily	GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN UA 5069 2:45am 3:35am 2, 4, 6, 7 UA5071 7:05am 7:55am Daily UA5073 9:50am 10:40am 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 UA5075 1:45pm 2:35pm 1, 4, 5, 7 UA5077 5:35pm 6:25pm Daily UA5079 8:20pm 9:10pm Daily
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT) DL287 6:00am 8:40am Daily DL285 6:35am 9:15am 1, 5, 7 DL297 4:25pm 7:20pm Daily	ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN UA5062 3:35am 4:10am 1, 3, 5 UA5038 10:55am 11:30am 6
SAIPAN-OSAKA (KIX) OZ119 4:00am 6:40am Daily	NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN DL298 10:25am 3:00pm Daily DL286 7:40pm 12:15am+1 4, 6, 7 DL288 8:40pm 1:15am+1 Daily
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS) OZ608 3:10am 6:20am 4, 6, 7 OZ608 3:30am 6:40am 3	OSAKA (KIX)-SAIPAN OZ120 9:50pm 2:20am+1 Daily
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN) OZ606 2:10am 6:00am 1 OZ606 2:40am 6:30am 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 OZ119 4:00am 11:20am Daily via KIX OZ604 3:20pm 7:10pm Daily	BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN OZ607 9:00pm 1:50am+1 3, 5, 6 OZ607 9:35pm 2:25am+1 2
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG) 3U8648 6:00am 8:35am 1, 4, 5, 7	SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN OZ603 9:00am 2:20pm Daily OZ120 7:10pm 2:20am+1 Daily via KIX OZ605 7:40pm 1:00am+1 7 OZ605 8:10pm 1:30am+1 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK) MU7108 3:50am 7:40am 1, 5	SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN 3U8647 10:30pm 4:30am+1 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN) 3U8646 4:20am 7:30am 2, 6	BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN MU7107 7:40pm 2:50am+1 4, 7
SAIPAN-VLADIVOSTOK (VVO) XF1734 11:55am 5:10pm 5	GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN 3U8645 7:40pm 3:00am+1 1, 5
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL) OZ606/701 2:10am 11:15am 1 OZ606/701 2:40am 11:15am 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 UA5070/191 4:35am 10:00am 6 via GUM UA5070/191 4:40am 10:00am 3 DL287/173 6:00am 10:25pm Daily via NRT UA5076/183 3:10pm 9:30pm 2, 5 via GUM UA5076/183 3:10pm 9:50pm 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM OZ604/703 3:20pm 11:00pm Daily via ICN UA5072/PR111 9:45pm 7:45am+1 1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM	VLADIVOSTOK (VVO)-SAIPAN XF1733 8:00pm 12:05am+1 4
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG) OZ606/721 2:10am 11:50am 1 via ICN OZ606/721 2:40am 11:50am 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN UA5076/147 3:10pm 10:30pm 1, 5 via GUM OZ604/749 3:20pm 11:00pm Daily via ICN	MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN OZ704/603 12:10am 2:20pm Daily via ICN DL172/288 8:05am 1:15am+1 Daily via NRT UA190/5077 10:55am 6:25pm 3, 6 via GUM UA190/5079 10:55am 9:10pm 3, 6 via GUM OZ702/605 12:30pm 1:00am+1 7 via ICN OZ702/605 12:30pm 1:30am+1 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN PR110/UA5072 10:15pm 7:55am+1 1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM UA184/5071 10:55pm 7:55am+1 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM UA184/5071 11:59pm 7:55am+1 2, 5 via GUM
SAIPAN-TINIAN FRE 101 6:45 6:55 Daily FRE 103 7:30 7:40 Daily FRE 105 8:00 8:10 Daily FRE 107 8:40 8:50 Daily FRE 109 9:10 9:20 Daily FRE 111 10:45 10:55 Daily	HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN OZ746/603 12:30am 2:20pm Daily via ICN OZ722/605 1:15pm 1:00am+1 7 via ICN OZ722/605 1:15pm 1:30am+1 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN UA180/5071 11:25pm 10:40am+1 1 via GUM UA180/5077 11:25pm 6:25pm+1 5 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; VLK: Vladivostok Air.

ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The *Saipan Tribune* is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency	Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota				FRE 115	13:00	13:10	Daily
FRE 100	7:30	8:00	Daily	FRE 117	14:30	14:40	Daily
Rota-Saipan				FRE 119	16:00	16:10	Daily
FRE 100	8:20	8:50	Daily	FRE 121	16:40	16:50	Daily
Guam-Rota				FRE 123	17:40	17:50	Daily
FRE 300	17:00	17:30	Daily	FRE 125	18:30	18:40	Daily
Rota-Saipan							
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily	Tinian-Saipan			
Saipan-Rota				FRE 102	7:05	7:15	Daily
FRE 200	9:30	10:00	Daily	FRE 104	7:50	8:00	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 106	8:20	8:30	Daily
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily	FRE 108	9:00	9:10	Daily
Saipan-Tinian				FRE 110	10:00	10:10	Daily
FRE 400	19:40	20:10	Daily	FRE 112	11:05	11:15	Daily
				FRE 114	12:00	12:10	Daily
FRE 101	6:45	6:55	Daily	FRE 116	13:30	13:40	Daily
FRE 103	7:30	7:40	Daily	FRE 118	14:50	15:00	Daily
FRE 105	8:00	8:10	Daily	FRE 120	16:20	16:30	Daily
FRE 107	8:40	8:50	Daily	FRE 122	17:00	17:10	Daily
FRE 109	9:10	9:20	Daily	FRE 124	18:05	18:15	Daily
FRE 111	10:45	10:55	Daily	FRE 126	18:50	19:00	Daily



NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Business

Forbes: Slim world's richest for 4th year in a row

NEW YORK (AP)—Mexico's Carlos Slim remains the world's richest man for the fourth year in a row, according to Forbes, while Warren Buffett dropped out of the top three for the first time since 2000.

And Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg saw his ranking drop 31 spots as his net worth declined by \$4.2 billion.

A record 1,426 people around the world made Forbes magazine's latest annual tally of billionaires, up 16 percent from last year. Their average net worth was \$3.8 billion, rising 3 percent from 2012. The total net worth for the list's billionaires was \$5.4 trillion compared with \$4.6 trillion a year ago.

The U.S. continued to house the most billionaires in the world, with 442 of them. It was followed by the Asia-Pacific region, with Europe rounding out the top three.

There were 210 new faces on the list, with Forbes saying many were helped by rebounding equity markets and strong consumer brands.

Slim's net worth increased to \$73 billion from \$69 billion a year earlier. Bill Gates of Micro-

soft Corp. held on to second place with a net worth of \$67 billion.

Berkshire Hathaway Inc.'s Buffett slipped to the fourth spot with a \$53.5 billion net worth. Buffett was surpassed by Spanish clothier Amancio Ortega, who jumped two spots from 2012 with a net worth of \$57 billion.

While Buffett dropped in the rankings, he added \$9.5 billion to his net worth—making him the second-biggest gainer of the year. The largest gainer was Ortega, who added \$19.5 billion to his net worth.

There were 138 women on the list, up from 2012's 104. Liliane Bettencourt—whose family owns a stake in L'Oreal—is the world's richest woman with a net worth of \$30 billion.

Brazil's Eike Batista had the biggest drop in his net worth, with it declining \$19.4 billion from the previous year. Facebook's Zuckerberg saw his net worth fall to \$13.3 billion from \$17.5 billion. His ranking fell to No. 66 from No. 35 in 2012.

There were 60 people that dropped off the list entirely, including Zynga's Mark Pincus and former Chesapeake Energy CEO Aubrey McClendon.



AP
Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates, left, and Mexican telecommunications tycoon Carlos Slim poses for photographers during the inauguration of the new research center at the International Center for Improvement of Corn and Wheat (CIMMYT) in Texcoco, Mexico, Wednesday, Feb. 13, 2013.

Republicans unveil government funding measure

WASHINGTON (AP)—Republicans controlling the House moved Monday to ease a crunch in Pentagon readiness while limiting the pain felt by such agencies as the FBI and the Border Patrol from the across-the-board spending cuts that are just starting to take effect.

The effort is part of a huge spending measure that would fund day-to-day federal operations through September—and head off a potential government shutdown later this month.

The measure would leave in place automatic cuts of 5 percent to domestic agencies and 7.8 percent to the Pentagon ordered by President Barack Obama Friday night after months of battling with Republicans over the budget. But the House Republicans' legislation would award the Defense and Veterans Affairs departments their detailed 2013 budgets, giving those agencies more flexibility on where money is spent, while other agencies would be frozen at 2012 levels—and then bear the across-the-board cuts.

The impact of the new cuts was proving slow to reach the broader public as Obama convened the first Cabinet meeting of his second term to discuss next steps.

The Pentagon did say it

would furlough thousands of military school teachers around the world and close commissaries an extra day each week. And Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano said the spending cuts were causing delays in customs lines at airports including Los Angeles International and O'Hare International in Chicago.

Obama said he was continuing to seek out Republican partners to reach a deal to ease or head off the cuts, but there was no sign that a breakthrough was in the works to reverse them.

The new GOP funding measure is set to advance through the House on Thursday. It's aimed at preventing a government shutdown when a six-month spending bill passed last September runs out March 27.

The latest measure would provide a \$10 billion increase for military operations and maintenance efforts and a boost for veterans' health programs, but would put most the rest of the government on budget autopilot. Military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq would be cut to \$87 billion—down from \$115 billion last year—reflecting ongoing troop withdrawals from Afghanistan.

"It is clear that this nation is facing some very hard choices,

and it's up to Congress to pave the way for our financial future," said bill sponsor Harold Rogers, R-Ky., chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. "But right now, we must act quickly and try to make the most of a difficult situation. This bill will fund essential federal programs and services, help maintain our national security, and take a potential shutdown off the table."

Senate Democrats want to add more detailed budgets for domestic Cabinet agencies but it'll take GOP help to do so. The House measure denies money sought by Obama and his Democratic allies to implement the signature 2010 laws overhauling the health care system and financial regulation.

After accounting for the across-the-board cuts, domestic agencies would face reductions exceeding 5 percent when compared with last year. But Republicans would carve out a host of exemptions seeking to protect certain functions, including federal prisons and fire-fighting efforts in the West, and to provide new funding for embassy security and modernizing the U.S. nuclear arsenal. The FBI and the Border Patrol would be able to maintain current staffing levels and would not have to furlough employees.

China plans for slower, consumer-driven growth

BEIJING (AP)—Premier Wen Jiabao on Tuesday pledged to transform China into a consumer-driven economy but gave no indication what Beijing will do about big state companies that reformers warn could handicap future growth.

Wen, speaking to China's ceremonial legislature, confirmed a 7.5 percent growth target in an annual economic plan. That is below the double-digit rates of the past decade but in line with Communist Party plans for a rebalancing of the world's second-largest economy away from reliance on trade and investment to drive growth.

Wen steps down next week after 10 years as China's top economic official but the goals he announced are part of a long-range plan incoming leaders under the newly installed party general secretary, Xi Jinping, are expected to adhere to.

"We should energetically change the growth model and speed up structural adjustment of industry," said Wen. "We should enhance people's ability to consume."

Promoting consumer spending would both support more self-sustaining growth and boost living standards for ordinary Chinese, who have been treated until now as a source of labor while an elite repeated most of the benefits of explosive growth.

The government is pressing companies to raise wages and pledged in January to narrow China's huge gap between the elite and its poor majority. But consumer spending is growing more slowly than authorities want, which has forced Beijing to rely on government-financed investment to support its recovery from an economic slowdown.

Wen gave no details of how Beijing will promote consumption but also promised efforts to clean up China's battered environment and promote energy conservation.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Group says Google shopping ads fuel ivory trade

BANGKOK (AP)—A conservation group claims that Google has something in common with illicit ivory traders in China and Thailand: It says the Internet search giant is helping to fuel a dramatic surge in ivory demand. The Environmental Investigation Agency, a conservation advocacy group, says there are some 10,000 ads on Google Japan's shopping site that promote the sale of ivory. About 80 percent of the ads are for "hanko," small wooden stamps widely used in Japan to affix signature seals to official documents. The stamps are legal and typically inlaid with ivory lettering.

Hess, under pressure, to exit retail business

NEW YORK (AP)—Hess is getting out of the gas station business and ridding itself of its energy trading and marketing businesses, as it shifts its focus further into exploration and production. The company will also nominate a slate of six independent directors to its board, replacing six that already hold seats. The announcement arrives about a month after the hedge fund Elliott Management, one of the company's largest shareholders, accused the board of "poor oversight," and said that the company's management was responsible for more than a "decade of failures."

Monster hits back at lawsuit over teenager's death

NEW YORK (AP)—Monster Beverage is hitting back at a lawsuit alleging its energy drinks were responsible for the death of a 14-year-old Maryland girl, saying that no blood test was performed to confirm that the girl died of "caffeine toxicity." The disclosure comes amid intensifying scrutiny of energy drinks and their caffeine levels. A lawsuit filed last year by the family of Anais Fournier said the girl went into cardiac arrest after drinking two, 24-ounce cans of Monster drinks in a 24-hour period. The Food and Drug Administration is also investigating reports of deaths linked to energy drinks, including five that cite Monster beverages. The agency has noted that the reports don't prove the drinks caused the deaths.



LEADING INDICATORS

DOW

14,127.82
+38.16
+0.27%

S&P

1,525.20
+7.00
+0.46%

NASDAQ

3,182.03
+12.29
+0.39%

EXCHANGE RATES

In U.S. dollar terms

Australian Dollar	0.9763
British Pound	0.6613
Canadian Dollar	1.0259
Chinese Yuan	6.2276
Euro	0.7673

Hong Kong Dollar	7.7557
Indian Rupee	54.758
Indonesian Rupiah	9705
Japanese Yen	93.11
Malaysian Ringgit	3.0997
New Zealand Dollar	1.2059

Philippine Peso	40.72
Singapore Dollar	1.244
South Korean Won	1086.5
Swiss Franc	0.9406
Taiwan Dollar	29.671
Thailand Baht	29.84

Nation

Study shows declining life span for some US women

NEW YORK (AP)—A new study offers more compelling evidence that life expectancy for some U.S. women is actually falling, a disturbing trend that experts can't explain.

The latest research found that women age 75 and younger are dying at higher rates than previous years in nearly half of the nation's counties—many of them rural and in the South and West. Curiously, for men, life expectancy has held steady or improved in nearly all counties.

The study is the latest to spot this pattern, especially among disadvantaged white women. Some leading theories blame higher smoking rates, obesity and less education, but several experts said they simply don't know why.

Women have long outlived men, and the latest numbers show the average life span for a baby girl born today is 81, and for a baby boy, it's 76. But the gap has been narrowing and data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has shown women's longevity is not growing at the same pace as men's.

The phenomenon of some women losing ground appears to have begun in the late 1980s, though studies have begun to spotlight it only in the last few years.



In this Saturday, March 2, 2013 photo, a woman smokes a cigarette while sitting in her truck in Hayneville, Ala. A new study released on Monday, March 4, 2013 offers more compelling evidence that life expectancy for some U.S. women is actually falling.

Trying to figure out why is "the hot topic right now, trying to understand what's going on," said Jennifer Karas Montez, a Harvard School of Public Health sociologist who has been focused on the life expectancy

decline but had no role in the new study.

Researchers also don't know exactly how many women are affected. Montez says a good estimate is roughly 12 percent.

The study, released Monday

by the journal Health Affairs, found declining life expectancy for women in about 43 percent of the nation's counties.

The researchers, David Kindig and Erika Cheng of the University of Wisconsin, looked

at federal death data and other information for nearly all 3,141 U.S. counties over 10 years. They calculated mortality rates for women age 75 and younger, sometimes called "premature death rates," because many of those deaths are considered preventable.

Many counties have such

small populations that even slight changes in the number of deaths produce dramatic swings in the death rate from year to year. To try to stabilize the numbers, the researchers computed some five-year averages. They also used statistical tricks to account for factors like income and education.

They found that nationwide, the rate of women dying younger than would be expected fell from 324 to 318 per 100,000. But in 1,344 counties, the average premature death rate rose, from 317 to about 333 per 100,000. Deaths rates rose for men in only about 100 counties.

"We were surprised" by how much worse women did in those counties, and by the geographic variations, Kindig said.

The study wasn't the first to reach those conclusions. Two years ago, a study led by the University of Washington's Dr. Christopher Murray also looked at county-level death rates. It too found that women were dying sooner, especially in the South.

Some other studies that focused on national data have highlighted steep declines in life expectancy for white women who never earned a high school diploma. Meanwhile, life expectancy seems to be growing for more educated and affluent women. Some experts also have suggested smokers or obese women are dragging down life expectancy.

Mourning in NY as baby dies after hit-and-run

NEW YORK (AP)—A close-knit ultra-Orthodox Jewish community in Brooklyn was plunged into a new round of mourning Monday by the death of a baby who was delivered by cesarean section after his parents were killed in a grisly hit-and-run crash a day earlier.

Police hunted for the suspected driver, identified as Julio Acevedo, saying he was barreling down a residential street in a BMW at 60 mph, or twice the speed limit, early Sunday when he collided with

a car hired to take the couple to the hospital.

The death of the newborn on Monday piled tragedy upon tragedy and compounded the community's grief.

The baby was buried near the fresh graves of his parents, Nachman and Raizy Glauber, both 21, according to Isaac Abraham, a spokesman for the Hasidic Jewish community. About a thousand com-

munity members turned out for the young couple's funeral a day earlier.



Acevedo

"The mood in the neighborhood is very heavy," said Oscar Sabel, a retired printer who lives near the scene of the accident. "We all hoped the baby would survive."

Brooklyn is home to the largest community of ultra-Orthodox Jews outside Israel, more than 250,000. The cou-

ple wed last year in a marriage arranged through a matchmaker and were living in the Williamsburg neighborhood.

They were members of the Satmar Hasidic sect, whose men dress in dark coats and hats, wear long beards like their Eastern European ancestors and have limited dealings with the outside world. Raizy Glauber grew up in a prominent rabbinical family. Her husband was studying at a rabbinical college; his family founded a line of clothing for Orthodox Jews.

Bush: No citizenship path for illegal immigrants

WASHINGTON (AP)—Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush writes in a new book that the nation needs to completely overhaul its immigration policies but cautions against providing a pathway to citizenship for illegal immigrants, a position that puts him at odds with some Senate reformers within his own party.

In "Immigration Wars: Forging an American Solution," Bush writes that the immigration debate holds serious consequences for the nation and members of his Republican party, calling fellow Republicans "remarkably tone-deaf when it comes to courting Hispanic voters—to the extent they court

them at all." If the GOP fails to change, he says the influence of Hispanic voters "will doom" the party's future.

The son and brother of U.S. presidents writes that lawmakers should create a path to legal status for undocumented immigrants who live in the U.S. and agree to plead guilty to a crime of illegal entry. But unlike a bipartisan Senate proposal pushed by fellow Florida Republican Marco Rubio and others, Bush says tougher border security should not be a prerequisite and a pathway to legal status should

not include citizenship for those who entered illegally as adults.

Bush's book, to be released Tuesday, arrives as President Barack Obama and Congress consider the revamping of the nation's immigration laws following Obama's re-election, which exposed a large deficit for Republicans among the nation's growing Hispanic electorate. Bush and co-author Clint Bolick, an attorney and vice president for litigation at the Arizona-based Goldwater Institute, contend immigration reform is essential



Bush

to economic growth and the nation's future but must be governed by the rule of law.

Bush said offering a path to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants who live in the U.S. could encourage more illegal immigration and undermine the nation's laws. "It is absolutely vital to the integrity of our immigration system that actions have consequences," he wrote. "In this case, that those who violated the laws can remain, but cannot obtain the cherished fruits of citizenship."

He writes that illegal immigrants who want to become citizens should have the choice of returning to their native countries and applying under the normal channels.

ACROSS THE NATION

12 charged with manslaughter in FAMU death

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—Twelve former Florida A&M University band members were charged Monday with manslaughter in the 2011 hazing death of a drum major. Ten of the band members had been charged last May with third-degree felony hazing for the death of 26-year-old Robert Champion, but the state attorney's office said they are adding the charge of manslaughter for each defendant. They also have charged two additional defendants with manslaughter, though they have yet to be arrested. The second-degree manslaughter charge announced during an afternoon status hearing carries a penalty of up to 15 years in prison.

Calif. woman dies after nurse refuses to do CPR

BAKERSFIELD, Calif. (AP)—A nurse's refusal to give CPR to a dying 87-year-old woman at a California independent living home despite desperate pleas from a 911 dispatcher has prompted outrage and spawned a criminal investigation. The harrowing 7-minute, 16-second call also raised concerns that policies at senior living facilities could prevent staff from intervening in medical emergencies. It prompted calls for legislation Monday to prevent a repeat of what happened Feb. 26 at the Glenwood Gardens in Bakersfield. Lorraine Bayless collapsed in the dining room of the retirement home that offers many levels of care. She lived in the independent living building, which state officials said is like a senior apartment complex and doesn't operate under licensing oversight.

Casey Anthony speaks at bankruptcy hearing

TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—Appearing in public for the first time since she was acquitted of murder, Casey Anthony revealed that she doesn't have a job or a car, lives with friends and relies on unsolicited gift cards and cash to get by. "I guess you could say I'm living free off the kindness" of others, Anthony said at a bankruptcy hearing in Tampa. Anthony, 26, was acquitted of murder in July 2011 in the death of her daughter, Caylee. She was released from jail several days later and disappeared from the spotlight. At the time, she had been vilified online and elsewhere, and her attorneys said threats had been made against her.

Asia

Malaysia attacks Filipino clan to end Borneo siege

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP)—Malaysian security forces attacked a group of armed Filipinos early Tuesday to end the group's three-week occupation of a Borneo village, the prime minister said after the siege turned violent and became Malaysia's biggest security crisis in years.

Najib Razak confirmed the assault was launched Tuesday morning after clashes have killed eight policemen and he declared over the weekend that security forces were authorized to take any action deemed necessary.

The main group of intruders comprises nearly 200 members of a Philippine Muslim clan, some bearing rifles, who slipped past naval patrols last month, landed at a remote Malaysian coastal village in eastern Sabah state's Lahad Datu district and insisted the territory was theirs.

Nineteen Filipino gunmen have also been slain since Friday in skirmishes that shocked Malaysians unaccustomed to such violence in their country, which borders insurgency-plagued southern provinces in the Philippines and Thailand.

The trespassers are surrounded by security forces as well as an undetermined number of other armed Filipinos suspected to have encroached on two other districts within 300 kilometers (200 miles) of Lahad Datu.

Army reinforcements from



Armed personnel carriers are transported to the area where the stand-off between Filipino gunmen and Malaysian police took place in Tanduo village, Sabah state's Lahad Datu, Malaysia Monday, March 4, 2013.

other states in Malaysia were being deployed to Sabah and would help police bolster public confidence by patrolling various parts of the state's eastern seaboard, Sabah police chief Hamza Taib said Monday.

The Philippine government asked Malaysia on Monday to exercise maximum tolerance to avoid further bloodshed.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert del Rosario headed to

Kuala Lumpur for talks on the crisis with his Malaysian counterpart, spokesman Raul Hernandez said. The Philippines will also ask that Malaysia allow a Philippine navy ship with medical and social workers to

travel to Lahad Datu to care for the wounded and take them and others back home, Hernandez said in Manila.

Some activists say the crisis illustrates an urgent need to review border security and im-

migration policies for Sabah, where hundreds of thousands of Filipinos have headed in recent decades—many of them illegally—to seek work and stability.

Groups of Filipino militants have occasionally crossed into

Sabah to stage kidnappings, including one that involved island resort vacationers in 2000. Malaysia has repeatedly intensified its patrols, but the long and porous sea border with the Philippines remains difficult to guard.

Diplomats: US, China agree on NKorea sanctions

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—The United States and China have reached agreement on a new draft sanctions resolution to punish North Korea for its latest nuclear test, U.N. diplomats said late Monday.

The U.N. Security Council announced late Monday evening that it will hold closed consultations on North Korea and non-proliferation at 11 a.m. (1600 GMT) Tuesday. The diplomats, speaking on condition of anonymity because no official announcement has been made, said the United States is expected to circulate a draft resolution to the full council at the meeting. Council mem-

bers are then expected to send the draft to their capitals for review.

All 15 council members approved a press statement condemning Pyongyang's nuclear test and pledging further action hours after North Korea carried out its third atomic blast on Feb. 12.

The swift and unanimous response from the U.N.'s most powerful body set the stage for a fourth round of sanctions against Pyongyang.

For the last three weeks, the United States, a close ally of South Korea and Japan, has been negotiating the text of a new resolution with China,

North Korea's closest ally.

Russian U.N. Ambassador Vitaly Churkin, whose country holds the council presidency this month, told a news conference Monday that a resolution on North Korea might be approved in March though the text had not yet been circulated.

Last month's statement from the Security Council called the underground test in February a "grave violation" of three U.N. resolutions that ban North Korea from conducting nuclear or missile tests.

North Korea's three nuclear tests—in 2006, 2009 and 2013—occurred after Pyongyang was condemned by the

United Nations for rocket launches.

The Security Council imposed sanctions after the first two nuclear tests and after the North's rocket launch in December, which was viewed as part of the country's covert program to develop ballistic missiles that can carry nuclear warheads.

The sanctions are aimed at trying to derail the country's rogue nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs. They bar North Korea from testing or using nuclear or ballistic missile technology, and from importing or exporting material for these programs.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Indian woman on 12-year hunger strike charged

NEW DELHI (AP)—Irom Sharmila has not eaten a meal in 12 years. The 40-year-old woman has been on a hunger strike—to protest an Indian law that suspends many human rights protections in areas of conflict. Sharmila was charged Monday with attempted suicide in a case likely to bring major attention to her quiet protest in the tiny north-eastern state of Manipur against the Armed Forces Special Powers Act. Under the law, in effect in Indian-ruled Kashmir and parts of the country's northeast, troops have the right to shoot to kill suspected rebels without fear of possible prosecution and to arrest suspected militants without a warrant. It also gives police wide-ranging powers of search and seizure.

Seoul police quiz US GIs over car-chase, shooting

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korean police say they are questioning U.S. soldiers over a high-speed car chase that resulted in a Seoul officer shooting a soldier after being hit by a car. The soldiers reportedly fired a BB gun at pedestrians on a Seoul street Saturday night before fleeing in a car. Police say an officer chased them in a taxi and fired at the car as it rushed by him. Police say the officer was injured and one U.S. soldier was shot in his shoulder but their injuries aren't life threatening.

3 Philippine men guilty of importing weapons to US

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Three Philippine nationals caught in a sting operation in their native country were convicted Monday of importing military-grade weapons to the United States in a case that earned international attention last year because of a defense lawyer's contention that an undercover FBI agent spent U.S. taxpayer dollars on prostitutes. After a four-week trial, a federal jury in Los Angeles convicted Sergio Syjuco, 26, Cesar Ubald, 27, and Arjyl Reverera, 26, of conspiring to illegally import the weapons and aiding and abetting their importation to the U.S. Each of the men could be sentenced to more than 20 years in prison and fined \$1 million or more. They're scheduled to be sentenced June 9.

Protests over Pakistan bombing turn deadly

KARACHI, Pakistan (AP)—Gunmen shot and killed two people returning from a funeral Monday for Shiite Muslim victims of a massive bombing in Karachi, highlighting escalating sectarian tensions in a city where 48 people were killed the day before.

The bomb exploded Sunday evening as people were leaving a mosque, and underlined the increasing threat Shiites face as Sunni militant groups target them in ever-bolder attacks. There was no immediate claim of responsibility but Sunni militant groups who do not consider Shiites to be true Muslims have carried out such attacks in the past.

Thousands of Shiite Muslims turned out Monday to bury their dead and demanded government protection from militant groups.

Some of those attending the funeral set fire to buses in one Karachi neighborhood as they went to the cemetery, said police official Qamar Ahmad.

When they moved through the same area after the funeral, gunmen opened fire on the group and wounded several protesters, he said. Two of the men died and 13 were wounded, said Dr. Saleem Memon, who works at the hospital where the wounded were taken.

The Sohrab Goth neighbor-

hood where the shooting occurred is home to many ethnic Pashtuns who traditionally live in northwestern Pakistan and eastern Afghanistan.

Over the years, many have migrated to the port city of Karachi. Security officials in Karachi have raised concerns that members of the Taliban—also predominantly Pashtun—are taking advantage of the large Pashtun community to hide themselves in Karachi and establish a foothold there.

Dr. Jalil Qadir, a Pakistani surgeon, said 48 people were killed and at least 200 wounded in the Sunday attack.

Thousands of people thronged

a main road in Karachi Monday for the funeral service. Many beat their chests and heads and chanted "Stop the brutal attacks!" They called on the government to take action against militant groups responsible for the attacks.

"Terrorists are killing us everywhere, but the state is nowhere to be seen," said Intizar Hussain, whose father died in the bombing.

It was the third mass casualty attack since the beginning of the year against Shiites. The first two killed nearly 200 people in the southwestern city of Quetta. Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, a Sunni militant group known for its virulent hatred of Shiite Muslims, claimed responsibility for the two attacks.

World

48 Syrian soldiers killed in Iraq ambush

BAGHDAD (AP)—Dozens of Syrian soldiers who had crossed into Iraq for refuge were ambushed Monday with bombs, gunfire and rocket-propelled grenades in an attack that killed 48 of them and heightened concerns that the country could be drawn into Syria's civil war.

The fact that the soldiers

were on Iraqi soil at all raises questions about Baghdad's apparent willingness to quietly aid the embattled regime of Syrian President Bashar Assad.

The well-coordinated attack, which Iraqi officials blamed on al-Qaida's Iraq arm, also suggests possible coordination between the militant group and its

ideological allies in Syria who rank among the rebels' most potent fighters.

Iraqi officials said the Syrians had sought refuge through the Rabiya border crossing in northern Iraq during recent clashes with rebels and were being escorted back home through a different crossing

farther south when the ambush occurred. Their convoy was struck near Akashat, not far from the Syrian border.

Ali al-Moussawi, a spokesman for Iraq's prime minister, provided the death toll and said nine Iraqi soldiers were also killed. The Syrians had been disarmed and included some

who were wounded, he told The Associated Press.

He said the soldiers had been allowed into Iraq only on humanitarian grounds and insisted that Baghdad was not picking sides in the Syrian conflict.

"We do not want more soldiers to cross our borders and we do not want to be part of the problem," al-Moussawi said. "We do not support any group against the other in Syria."

The Iraqi Defense Ministry said 10 additional Syrians were wounded in the assault. In a statement, it warned all parties in the Syrian war against bringing the fight into Iraq, saying its response will be "firm and tough."

Iraqi officials who provided details of the attack described

a carefully orchestrated assault on the Syrians' convoy, with a senior military intelligence official saying the attackers appeared to have been tipped off ahead of time.

He and another Iraqi official, speaking on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to release the information, said it was unlikely that Syrian rebels had managed to cross into Iraq to carry out the attack.

"This attack bears the hallmarks of the al-Qaida terrorist organization," said Jassim al-Halbousi, provincial council member in Anbar, the restive western region where the attack happened. "The borders should be secured at the highest level of alert."



AP

In this Sunday March 3, 2013 image taken from video obtained from the Shaam News Network, which has been authenticated based on its contents and other AP reporting, Syrian rebel fighters tour the police academy complex in Khan al-Asal, in the province of Aleppo, Syria.

Unrest in Egyptian city draws in military

CAIRO (AP)—Clashes between protesters and the police in the restive Egyptian city of Port Said that entered their second day Monday have dragged in the military to a dramatic extent into the nation's turmoil.

At times in the violence, frictions have arisen between the police that were battling protesters and army forces that tried to break up the fighting. Troops in between the two sides were overwhelmed by police tear gas, one army colonel was wounded by live fire, and troops even opened fire over the heads of police, bringing cheers from protesters.

Three policemen and three civilians were killed in the fighting, and troops stood by as protesters torched a government complex Monday that contains the city's main police building.

The scenes, following three weeks of strikes and protests in the city, have underlined a scenario that many in Egypt view with a mix of concern and relief—that the military may move back into politics, prompted by mushrooming protests, a breakdown in law and order and mounting challenges to the Islamist President Mohammed Morsi. Some op-

ponents of Morsi have outright called for the military to take power, and even those who say they oppose a military return have used the prospect to pressure Morsi to find some consensus in the country's political crisis.

Prominent opposition leader Mohammed ElBaradei warned of decaying state institutions and rising levels of violence.

"The regime in its current form is unable to manage the country," he wrote on his Twitter account. "There must be a radical review before it is too late."

Unable to halt the violence, both the police and mili-

tary Monday sought to deny any tensions between them. Meanwhile, there was no official comment from the presidency following one of the worst flare-ups of violence since January.

Unrest also spread in other parts of the country. In the capital, Cairo, protesters blocked the main thoroughfare along the Nile River, and police tried to clear them with volleys of tear gas. Other disgruntled young men set fire to two police cars in two different locations in Cairo, sending police fleeing the vehicles in the middle of traffic.

Israel on alert as locusts cross in from Egypt

JERUSALEM (AP)—A swarm of locusts crossed into Israel from neighboring Egypt Monday, raising fears that Israel could be hit with a biblical plague ahead of the Passover holiday.

Israel sent out planes to spray pesticides over agricultural fields to prevent damage by the small swarm, which numbers about 2,000 locusts, said Dafna Yurista, a spokeswoman for the Agriculture Ministry. The ministry also set up an emergency hotline and asked Israelis to be vigilant in report-

ing locust sightings.

The locust alert comes ahead of the weeklong Passover festival, which recounts the biblical story of the Israelite exodus from Egypt. According to the Bible, a huge swarm of locusts was the eighth of 10 plagues God imposed on Egyptians to persuade Pharaoh to free the ancient Hebrews from slavery. Pharaoh did not agree to let them go until after the 10th plague, the death of the first born in every Egyptian family.

This year Passover begins

March 25.

Locusts can have a devastating effect on agriculture by quickly stripping crops. Farmers told Israeli media they were worried about a potential onslaught.

"(The locusts) may not have ruined Pharaoh, but they could ruin us," Tzachi Rimon, a farmer, told Israel's Channel 10 TV.

Yurista said the number of locusts was relatively small, but "just because they aren't many doesn't mean we are ignoring them."

Locusts are known to move with the wind, and the swarm was swept eastwards from Egypt, said Amir Ayali, who heads Tel Aviv University's zoology department, on Channel 10 TV. The last time Israel experienced a major locust outbreak was in 2004.

Egypt's state news agency MENA said more than 17,000 locusts were exterminated in an area spanning more than 84,000 acres. No significant economic losses were reported, as the locusts were not mature enough to cause damage and did not remain long in the area to feed. Other affected areas were mostly desert.



AP

In this file photo released on Feb. 15, 2013 by Miraflores Presidential Press Office, Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez, center, poses for a photo with his daughters, Maria Gabriela, left, and Rosa Virginia at an unknown location in Havana, Cuba, Thursday, Feb. 14, 2013.

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)—A new and severe respiratory infection has cancer-stricken President Hugo Chavez in a "very delicate" state, and his breathing has deteriorated, the Venezuelan government announced late Monday.

Communications Minister Ernesto Villegas read a brief statement on national television saying Chavez's "worsening respiratory function" was related to a weakening of his immune system.

He said the charismatic socialist leader had "a new and severe infection." The state news agency identified it as a respiratory infection.

Villegas said Chavez had been undergoing "chemotherapy of strong impact, among other treatments."

He said Chavez's condition continues to be very delicate and that he was "standing by Christ and life conscious of the difficulties he faces."

In the statement, Villegas lashed out at "the corrupt Venezuelan right" for what he called a psychological war seeking "scenarios of violence" to encourage "foreign

intervention in Venezuela."

Upon Chavez's death, the opposition would contest the government's candidate in a snap election, and the campaigning has already begun although undeclared. Chavez has governed Venezuela, gradually placing all state institutions under his personal control, for more than 14 years.

Opposition lawmaker Julio Borges condemned Villegas' statement via Twitter as an inappropriate use of a medical bulletin for political reasons: "I lament such a poverty of humanity."

There has been speculation that Chavez's cancer has spread to his lungs and can't be halted.

An oncologist not involved in Chavez's treatment, which has been conducted in secrecy, told The Associated Press that he viewed Villegas' statement as recognition that Chavez's condition is "truly precarious." He called into question the veracity of Villegas' statement that Chavez had been under chemotherapy, saying patients in such a delicate state simply are not put on chemotherapy.

Focus

By JEAN H. LEE
ASSOCIATED PRESS

“Hello world from comms center in (hash)Pyongyang.”

That Twitter missive, sent Monday from Koryolink’s main service center in downtown Pyongyang using my iPhone, marked a milestone for North Korea: It was believed to be the first tweet sent from a cellphone using the country’s new 3G mobile data service.

Later, as we were driving through Pyongyang, I used my iPhone to snap a photo of a new roadside banner referring to North Korea’s controversial Feb. 12 nuclear test while AP’s Chief Asia photographer David Guttenfelder uploaded an image to Instagram of a tour guide at a mountain temple, geotagged to Pyongyang.

Pretty ordinary stuff in the world of social media, but revolutionary for North Korea, a country with intricate rules to stage manage the flow of images and information both inside and beyond its borders.

In the past, rules were strict for tourists visiting North Korea. On a bus journey across the Demilitarized Zone into the border city of Kaesong in 2008, we were told: No cellphones, no long camera lenses, no shooting photos without permission. The curtains were drawn to prevent us from looking outside as we drove through the countryside, and through the cracks we could see soldiers stationed along the road with red flags. We were warned they’d raise those flags and stop the bus for inspection if they spotted a camera pointed out the window. As we left North Korea, immigration officials went through our cameras, clicking through the photos to make sure we weren’t taking home any images that were objectionable.

In 2009, I did not offer up my iPhone as we went through customs. But to no avail. The eagle-eyed officer dug deep into the pocket where I’d tucked the phone away, wagged his finger and slipped the phone into a little black bag. No phone, no address book, no music: It was as though I’d left the modern world behind at Sunan airport and stepped back in time to a seemingly prehistoric analog era.

Eventually, Guttenfelder and I settled into a working routine. We’d leave our cellphones at the airport but use locally purchased phones with SIM cards provided by Koryolink, the joint Egyptian-North Korean cellphone venture that established a 3G network in 2008, but without data. We brought iPod Touches and connected to the world, including Twitter, using broadband Internet that may be installed on request at our hotel, which is for international visitors.

We knew in January that change was afoot. “Bring your own phone next time,” a Koryolink saleswoman told me at the airport as we were departing. The next day, the longstanding rule of requiring visitors to re-

Tweets allow peek at life in NK Korea in real time



Female North Korean traffic police officers gather in front of bronze statues of the late leaders Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il to pay their respects in Pyongyang, North Korea on Saturday, Feb. 16, 2013. North Koreans turned out to commemorate what would have been the 71th birthday of Kim Jong Il who died on Dec. 17, 2011. AP

linquish their phones was gone.

But we were waiting for the day when Koryolink would begin offering mobile Internet, and hounded the Egyptians posted to North Korea from Orascom Telecom Media and Technology for news.

“Soon,” they kept telling us.

Last week, they called with good news: 3G mobile Internet would be available within a week—only for foreigners.

All we had to do when we arrived in February was show our passports, fill out a registration form, provide our phones’ IMEI numbers and pop in our Koryolink SIM cards. It’s a costly luxury: SIM cards are 50 euros, or about \$70, and while calls to Switzerland are an inexplicably cheap 38 euro cents a minute, calls to the U.S. cost about \$8 a minute.

After reporting last week on the imminent availability of 3G mobile Internet, we turned up at the Koryolink offices Monday to be among the first ones to activate the service.

After paying a steep 75-euro fee and sending a text to activate the service, we waited for the 3G symbol to pop up on our phones.

Moments later, I sent the inaugural tweet, which was queued up and ready to go. There was a little celebration that morning in the Koryolink office among the Egyptians who labored to set up the service and their North Korean partners.

Our North Korean colleagues watched with surprise as we showed them we could surf the Internet from our phones.

Koreans, North and South, love gadgets.

Not all North Koreans have local cellphones. Those who do use them to call colleagues to arrange work meetings, phone and text friends to set up dinner dates and ring home to check in on their babies. They snap photos with their phones and swap MP3s. They read North Korean books and the Workers’ Party newspaper, *Rodong Sinmun*, on their phones.

But they cannot surf the “international” Internet, as they

call it. The World Wide Web remains strictly off limits for most North Koreans. North Korean universities have their own fairly sophisticated Intranet system, though the material posted to it is closely vetted by authorities and hews to propaganda. Students say they can email one another, but they can’t send emails outside the country.

Leader Kim Jong Un has pushed science and technology as major policy directives, and we’re starting to see more laptops in North Korean offices. The new Samjiyon tablet computer, made in China for the North Korean market, was sold out when I last checked at a local computer shop.

Even during the days when no mobile data were available, Guttenfelder figured out a way to activate Wi-Fi sharing among his laptop, iPod touch and iPhone, and began posting geotagged pictures to Instagram. Using Loopcam, I began uploading small GIF videos that have the feel of an old-fashioned

flipbook, giving movement and life to the scene on the street.

These are snapshots captured as we go about our daily life working in North Korea: a man getting a haircut at a barber shop, traffic cops lacing up ice skates, a villager hauling a bundle of firewood on her back as she trudges through a snowy field. Some are quirky, unexpected things that catch our attention: a blinking Christmas tree in February, the cartoon “Madagascar” showing on state TV, a basket of baguettes at the supermarket.

And some are politically telling: the empty highway from Pyongyang, people piling onto trucks for transportation, postcards showing soldiers attacking Americans, banners praising the scientists who sent a rocket into space. Despite the new construction, gadgets and consumer goods, North Korea is still grappling with grave economic hardship. It’s a society governed by a web of strict rules and regulations, a nation wary of the out-

side world.

Often, they are images, videos and details that may not make it onto the AP’s products but provide a behind-the-scenes glimpse of a country largely hidden from view even in our globalized, interconnected world. They help give a sense of the feel, smell and look of the place away from the pomp of the orchestrated events shown by the state media. It is a way for us to share what we see, large and small, during our long stays in a nation off limits to most Western journalists and still largely a mystery, even to us.

On Monday evening, while discussing how to cover the arrival of ex-NBA star Dennis Rodman and describing his array of tattoos and nose rings, we did what wasn’t possible in the past: We Googled him from a local restaurant.

Twenty-four hours later, Rodman himself appeared to be online and tweeting from North Korea.

“I come in peace. I love the people of North Korea!” he wrote.

Campus Life

ESFDB names winners of its first Science (STEM) Fair

To bring science to a level that children can understand, Eskuelan San Francisco de Borja administrator/principal Carmen H. Atalig set out to organize the school's first science fair.

Dubbed as "STEM Fair: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math," the event was a wonderful opportunity for all students to create awesome projects to investigate a topic of interest. ESFDB students in all grades were welcome to exhibit a scientific display, experiment, or collection.

Atalig was pleased with the organization of the event. "It's obvious the students have worked hard on their projects and learned a lot about science," she said.

Randy Jesse Taisacan, excited about all he has learned about magnetism, explained and demonstrated the theories of defying gravity. The third-grader said he and his father, Rota police officer Randy Taisacan, had fun playing and experimenting with magnets to prepare for the science fair.

Second-grade student Kaitlyn Balgoa was eager to show her display, "Which soil is better for planting in Rota: Songsong Village or Sinapalo Village Area?"



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

ESFDB Science (STEM) Fair winners pose for a souvenir picture with the school administrator/principal, science coordinators, and science fair judges.

Based on her experiment she concluded that the soil from Sinapalo Village area is good for planting than the soil from Songsong Village. "I am very happy about winning and feel a sense of accomplishment," Kaitlyn said. "The project took a lot of hard work and I am glad to see that it paid off."

Projects were judged by a distinguished panel of judges. All participants had to be present for the interview portion. After the conclusion of the judging, the finalists were announced to represent the school at the CNMI Islandwide STEM Fair to be held on Saipan on March 16, 2013.

The winners that will represent

ESFDB at the CNMI Islandwide STEM Fair are: SonJoe Manuel (1st Grade), Kaitlyn Balgoa (2nd Grade), Randy Jesse Taisacan (3rd Grade), Marjorie Banaag (5th Grade), Loreville Clitar (7th Grade), Angelica Lucero (7th Grade), and Jonelle Toskas (7th Grade).

School science coordinators Florinda Chavez and Mary Rose Lucero will accompany the students to Saipan. The two coordinators are behind the drive of the students' work and dedication toward their success.

ESFDB board president Edward Maratita Jr., who also attended the science fair and

served as one of the judges, said, "Anytime you can get teachers, parents, and kids working together, it's a great sign toward the success of the child."

We are very proud of all of our students who took part in the School Level STEM Fair! Our students show a wealth of new learning and understanding, and they had fun and learned new skills.

The administration, faculty, and staff would like to extend their appreciation to Tita Hocog who served as a judge and donated cash prizes for the winners; and to Ali Badilles of NMC CREES and Manuel Borja who also served as judges. (Edward Maratita, Jr.)

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The first Master of Education in Reading Online program cohort will be graduating this fall. The second cohort starts in summer 2013. Recruitment for the second cohort has begun and applications will be accepted until April 1, 2013. For more information, contact Dr. Catherine Stoicovy, Reading Program chair, at cstoicovy@uog.edu or visit the UOG School of Education online at www.uog.edu/soe.

The deadline to apply for graduate status at the UOG Graduate Studies Office (Tel. 735-2170/2676) is April 16, 2013.

The UOG Master of Education in Reading Online brochure can be downloaded here: <http://sdrv.ms/Zf6WXT>. (UOG)

Congressman Kilili visits our class

By ESTHER D. MANZANO
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Karissa Quichocho, one of my third-grade students at Grace Christian Academy, wrote a letter inviting Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan to visit our class. Sablan was elected in 2008 as the first nonvoting delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives from the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The congressman responded and told Karissa that his office will communicate with our school administration. Marsha Owens, GCA principal, then told me that they scheduled the visit on Feb. 13, 2013. The parents of my students were informed about this through our Weekly Information Sheet, and some were excited upon knowing that he will only visit our class. I told my students to prepare questions that they will ask the congressman.

After he introduced himself to the class, the congressman encouraged each student to ask him a question; he said he does not want to do all the talking. He responded directly to the students by answering each question asked. Furthermore, he related stories about his experiences as a child, student, husband, and as a representative for the people



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Grace Christian Academy's 3-Kindness class with Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP), GCA principal Marsha Owens, and third-grade teacher Esther Manzano have their picture taken inside the classroom.

of CNMI.

Here are some of the questions asked by some of the students and some of the responses:

Jireh Warren: "Where do you live?"

Answer: "I live in Garapan." He said that he also lived and studied in Chuuk.

Clerisse Dacumos: "How long have you been a congressman for the CNMI?"

Answer: "I've been a congressman for almost five years now."

Karina Dilse: Are you excited for Valentines?"

Answer: My wife and I are

excited. I will send her flowers."

Joyce Francisco: "Why do you like reading books?"

Answer: Reading books is better than watching TV, and it makes you learn a lot." The congressman tells about the importance of reading books, and he also acknowledged the Bible by holding Karissa's Bible and said that it is one of the most important books to read.

Miku Kimura: What is your plan about the economy of the CNMI?"

Answer: "My office will try to get more funds especially for education."

Miku then asked a question her Mom told her to ask him, "What will happen to those who have CW status after 2014?"

Answer: "We are working very hard to have an extension of the CW status." Then he asked, "Who are those who were born on Saipan?" He noticed the ethnic diversity of the class. There are students whose parents are Chamorros, Koreans, Filipinos, Chinese, Japanese, and one from American Samoa. He said he is working hard in the U.S. Congress so that their parents who are not U.S. citizens can stay with them

even after 2014.

James Keaton: "Who do you work for?"

Answer: "I work for you!" The class laughed, but he said, "I'm serious. I work for people like you; young and old or *man'amko*, all people of the CNMI."

On behalf of my third-grade class, we want to thank Congressman Kilili for taking time out of his busy schedule to visit our class and for sharing us firsthand information about his role in Congress, his duties, the people that he represents, and even some personal information that I never

heard, read, or watch before.

This is what the congressman posted on his Facebook page and newsletter. "These bright 9-year-olds were very in tune with current issues in the Commonwealth and were ready with questions for me ranging from immigration to my daily commute to work when I am in D.C. Thank you principal Marsha Owens, students, and staff for your hospitality. Go Eagles!"

Esther D. Manzano is a third-grade teacher at Grace Christian Academy.

Life & Style

Report: Australian miners fired for 'Harlem Shake'

PERTH, Australia (AP)—Up to 15 miners were fired from their high-paying jobs in an Australian gold mine after a "Harlem Shake" performance underground was deemed a safety hazard, a newspaper reported on Monday.

A YouTube video shows eight miners wearing safety gear while performing the convulsive dance in the Agnew Gold Mine last week. The West Australian newspaper quoted a sacked worker who wouldn't give his name as saying up to 15 people were fired, including some who watched the performance but did not participate.

Mine owner Barminto considered the stunt a safety issue and a breach of its "core values of safety, integrity and excellence," according to a dismissal letter cited by the paper.

The letter noted that Barminto would not allow the dancing workers "to be subcontracted by Barminto at any site domestically and globally."

It's not clear from the video what safety issues are raised. The dancing miners wear helmets, but five are shirtless. The sacked worker told the newspaper that shirts had been removed to ensure the Barminto name

did not appear in the video.

Barminto, which has operations in Africa as well as its native Australia, did not immediately respond to a request for comment Monday.

Australia is experiencing a mining boom, with thousands of workers attracted by high salaries to remote Outback mines. The West Australian said the miners who lost their jobs had six-figure salaries.

The unnamed worker who spoke to the newspaper said the miners were only "having a bit of fun." A Facebook page set up seeking their reinstatement

carried comments supporting the workers as well as people saying safety regulations should be obeyed.

Paddy Gorman, spokesman for the Construction, Forestry, Mining, and Energy Union, said none of the miners at Agnew Gold Mine in resource-rich Western Australia state is a member of the mining union.

Up to 4,000 videos of "Harlem Shake" variations are uploaded on the Internet daily. The song "Harlem Shake," recorded by Brooklyn disc jockey and producer Baauer, is currently No. 2 on the Australian singles chart.

Rising in rock: Imagine Dragons making moves

NEW YORK (AP)—When he first started working with Imagine Dragons, music producer Alex da Kid was looking for some inspiration for the Broadway musical, "Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark."

"I thought they would be great to help me come up with ideas for U2," the Grammy-nominated English producer said.

There was just one problem: The demos they recorded were too good.

So instead of using the alternative band to collaborate on the score by Bono and The Edge, Alex da Kid—the creator of Eminem and Rihanna's colossal hit "Love the Way You Lie"—immediately signed the Las Vegas-based foursome to his label imprint KIDiNAKORNER Records, distributed through Interscope Records.

Imagine Dragons released its debut album, "Night Visions," in September and so far has reached gold status, selling more than 600,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan. The band currently has two songs in the Top 25 with "It's Time" and "Radioactive" and they are on a sold-out U.S. tour that wraps June 3 in Phoenix.

Imagine Dragons had been building a buzz on the music scene as an independent act before Alex da Kid got hold of them. They released four EPs and toured America. Lead singer Dan Reynolds said the group was "dead set" on being an independent act.

"We had offers from those labels all throughout the years and we turned them down," he said. "It was so important that we built that organic, independent fan base."

Three of the band members met while "playing jazz togeth-



In this Feb. 6, 2013 photo, Las Vegas-based rock band Imagine Dragons, from left, Ben McKee, Wayne Sermon, Dan Platzman and Dan Reynolds pose for a group portrait in Las Vegas.

er a lot" at the Berklee College of Music.

"I just didn't think I'd ever play with them again to be honest. I hoped that I would someday," said guitarist Wayne Sermon (bassist Ben McKee and drummer Dan Platzman round out the group). "I called (Reynolds) and he had eight credits left before he could graduate and get his degree, but apparently he didn't care much about that, so he just actually left and dropped everything and came to Vegas."

Meeting Alex da Kid, born Alexander Grant, changed his perception about staying independent. He says the producer filled a void in the band's sound.

"We didn't feel like we were ready as a band. We didn't understand our sound enough and our theme and who we are, and we didn't want to try to tell people that story until we didn't understand ourselves," Reynolds said. "(Alex) was the perfect match for what we had been

trying to do for three years."

"It's Time"—the breakthrough anthem for the band—was built from Reynold's personal issues.

"I've always struggled a bit with depression and anxiety and that song was at a particularly low point for me: I was dropping out of college (and) going through some personal issues," he said. "Late one night I was in my kitchen and I was really just writing a song for myself. I wasn't thinking of writing for the band or anything."

But watching him onstage with his bandmates wouldn't give you the impression that he's struggling with anything: The 25-year-old is wild as he works the crowd with dance moves that shows he's got rhythm and swagger. The tall and slim singer, in fitted jeans and small T-shirt, belts his rock melodies while playing one of the six drum sets onstage.

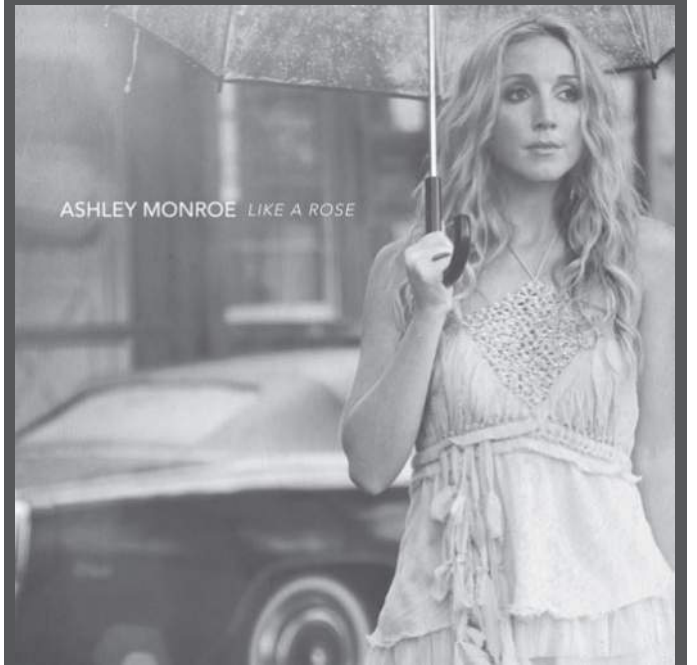
Looks, of course, can be deceiving.

"I've always dealt with it my entire life," Reynolds continues about battling depression. "I've never been able to feel like I can fully be myself until I walked onstage and sang a song."

"Night Visions" is 44 minutes of drum-filled, rock-based melodies that keep the percussion sound forefront. The songs are grounded in ambition: Living life, finding success, making things work and staying positive. "On Top of the World" and "Underdog" are self-explanatory. "Tiptoe," a song about rising above with an addictive, dancey vibe, features the repeated line: "I won't fall asleep." And "It's Time," which has sold close to 2 million tracks, is about staying true to oneself.

"There wasn't any real pressure to come up with a hit for (Imagine Dragons)," said Alex da Kid, who also produced hits like B.o.B's "Airplanes," Dr. Dre's "I Need a Doctor" and Lupe Fiasco's "Words I Never Said."

Songwriter Ashley Monroe finally has her moment



NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—John Grady recently handed Ashley Monroe a box filled with copies of her new album, "Like a Rose." He'd rushed out of the building and caught her in the parking lot. The arrival of the CDs was a milestone moment for the country singer-songwriter and her manager, the culmination of nearly a decade of work together.

To be honest, Grady was a little misty.

Not Monroe. She tossed the box in her car, put the vehicle in drive and headed right on down the road. Just like she's always done. Throw out any obstacle and Monroe will deal with it.

"I'm just now learning that there is a master plan," Monroe said. "Because there's been many times where I've looked up at the sky and thought, 'Really? What am I doing? What am I supposed to be doing?' But now I'm seeing all the good and the bad that I've lived and experienced just kind of come together. OK, all that was supposed to happen."

Need proof?

Witness the glowing reviews and warm reception she's received for "Like a Rose," co-produced by Vince Gill, a modern take on traditional country music.

She's a member of the country music supertrio Pistol Anies with Miranda Lambert.

And what about that blingy engagement ring from Chicago White Sox pitcher John Danks?

Seems like everything's wrapped up with a nifty bow for Monroe at age 26. But track her story back to when she was 14 and you get a picture of just how far she's come.

Monroe lost her father to pancreatic cancer when she was 13, and for a while, her mother to grief. That's when she started writing songs.

"I thought, 'I've got to get this out,'" she said. "It was so heavy and so sad and everything had changed so drastically."

By 14, she was trying to pull her Knoxville, Tenn.-based family back together. She did so by taking a bold step.

"I said, 'We've got to start over. We can't be in this town. It's going to poison us. Everywhere we go people are going to be like, 'Are you OK?' or judging us because we weren't making the healthiest of decisions, any of us,'" Monroe said.

"It was just grief. We were just saturated in grief. I said, 'We've got to move to Nashville. We've got to start over. We've got to get a new scene and I'll write every day and we'll make this work. We've got to make it work.'"

And for a while, it did. Only 15 when she started to haunt Music Row, she caught the attention of songwriter Brett James almost immediately and soon met Grady, who was then president of Sony Music Nashville. Grady guided her into her first record deal and in 2007, Monroe finished her first album, "Satisfied."

However, "Satisfied" was caught in the gravitational forces of a merger and was never released by the label. She put it on iTunes in 2009 and jokes that 500 people have bought it over the years.

Monroe returned to writing and worked with everyone who'd take her call. She didn't limit herself to country. She'd pop up all over town, writing with Gill or Lambert or Guy Clark. She recently teamed up with rock 'n' singer-guitarist Brendan Benson to write a song for the TV show "Nashville." And Jack White has pulled her in to work on projects with Ricky Skaggs and Wanda Jackson.

Underworld saint becoming more popular in US

ALBUQUERQUE, New Mexico (AP)—A follower in New Orleans built a public shrine in her honor. An actor in Albuquerque credits her with helping him land a role on the TV show “Breaking Bad.” She turns up routinely along the U.S.-Mexico border at safe houses, and is sighted on dashboards of cars used to smuggle methamphetamine through the southwest desert.

Popular in Mexico, and sometimes linked to the illicit drug trade, the skeleton saint known as La Santa Muerte in recent years has found a robust and diverse following north of the border: immigrant small business owners, artists, gay activists and the poor, among others—many of them non-Latinos and not all involved with organized religion.

Clad in a black nun’s robe and holding a scythe in one hand, Santa Muerte appeals to people seeking all manner of otherworldly help: from fending off wrongdoing and carrying out vengeance to stopping lovers from cheating and landing better jobs. And others seek her protection for their drug shipments and to ward off law enforcement.

“Her growth in the United States has been extraordinary,” said Andrew Chesnut, author of “Devoted to Death: Santa Muerte, the Skeleton Saint” and the Bishop Walter F. Sullivan Chair in Catholic Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University. “Because you can ask her for anything, she has mass appeal and is now gaining a diverse group of followers throughout the country. She’s the ultimate multi-tasker.”

Exact numbers of her followers are impossible to determine, but they are clearly growing, Chesnut said.

Actress Geena Davis critical of Oscar host

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)—Academy Award winner Geena Davis on Monday waded into the ongoing controversy over this year’s Oscars ceremony by saying host Seth MacFarlane’s routine was disrespectful to women, particularly the performers who were being honored.

The “Thelma & Louise” star said MacFarlane’s much-criticized routine last month overshadowed the win of an animated film with a strong female character.

“It’s a shame that that triumph was enveloped in an awards ceremony containing disrespect for women,” Davis told members of the California Assembly during a ceremony in Sacramento. “But it helps illustrate how tone-deaf we can still be regarding the status of women.”

She commended “Brave,” which won best animated picture, as setting a positive example for girls.

Davis, who won a best supporting actress Oscar for “The Accidental Tourist” in 1988, was in the state capital as one of 11 California women honored

The saint is especially popular among Mexican-American Catholics, rivaling that of St. Jude and La Virgen de Guadalupe as a favorite for miracle requests, even as the Catholic Church in Mexico denounces Santa Muerte as satanic, experts say.

Her image has been used on prayers cards citing vengeance and protection, which are sometimes found at scenes of massacred bodies and on shipments of drugs.

U.S. Marshal Robert Almonte in West Texas said he has testified about La Santa Muerte in at least five drug trafficking cases where her image aided prosecutors with convictions. Last year, Almonte testified that a Santa Muerte statue prayer card, found with a kilogram of methamphetamine in a couple’s car in New Mexico, were “tools of the trade” for drug traffickers to protect them from law enforcement. The testimony was used to help convict the couple of drug trafficking.

Almonte has visited shrines throughout Mexico, and given workshops to law enforcement agencies on the cult of the saint.

“Criminals pray to La Santa Muerte to protect them from law enforcement,” Almonte said. “But there are good people who pray to her who aren’t involved in any criminal activity, so we have to be careful.”

Small statues of La Santa Muerte have been spotted in religious stores as far as Minneapolis, and an art show in Tucson, Arizona features all La Santa Muerte images.

Devotees said La Santa Muerte has helped them find love, find better jobs and launch careers.

Gregory Beasley Jr., 35, believes he landed acting roles on “Breaking Bad” and the 2008 movie “Linewatch” after a tra-

ditional Mexican-American

healer introduced him to La Santa Muerte. “All my success ... I owe to her,” he said. “She cleansed me and showed me the way.”

Some devotees pray to the saint by building altars and offering votive candles, fruits, tequila, cigarettes—even lines of cocaine in some cases—in exchange for wishes, Chesnut said. A red La Santa Muerte, her best-selling image, helps in matters of love. Gold ones aid with employment and white ones give protection. Meanwhile, a black Santa Muerte can provide vengeance.

need you more than ever,” said Jackson, referring to Davis’ work on gender issues as she introduced the actress and other honorees on the Senate floor.

In her remarks to Assembly members, Davis said much work remains to ensure equal opportunities for young women. The state commission she leads is focused on the areas of women and families in the military, in business, health and safety, education, and gender equality in the media.

Davis also referenced Lavonne “Pepper” Paire-Davis, a women’s baseball league star in the 1940s and the inspiration for “A League of Their Own.” The Los Angeles native, who passed away last month, once described playing baseball as being as second-nature to her as breathing, she said.

“Every girl in California should be able to pursue a dream that’s as natural to her as breathing,” Davis said. “We need to support them to make sure they have the messages and the tools to get there.”



In this Feb. 12, 2013 photo, an altar to La Santa Muerte run by Arely Vazquez Gonzalez, a Mexican immigrant and transgender woman, is shown inside a Queens, NY apartment.

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York apartment. Against one wall of her bedroom altar is a tall, sitting Santa Muerte statue in a black dress surrounded by offerings of tequila.

Gonzalez, who sports a tattoo of La Santa Muerte on her back, holds an annual event in August in the saint’s honor, with mariachis and a feast.

“All I have to do I ask for her guidance and she provides me with what I need,” she said.

The origins of La Santa Muerte are unclear. Some followers say she is an incarnation of an Aztec goddess of death who ruled the underworld. Some scholars say she originated in medieval Spain through the image of La Parca, a female Grim Reaper, who was used by friars for the later evangelization of indigenous populations in the Americas.

For decades, though, La Santa Muerte remained an underground figure in isolated regions of Mexico and served largely as an unofficial Catholic saint that women called upon to help with cheating spouses, Chesnut said.

It wasn’t until 2001 when a devotee unveiled a public La Santa Muerte shrine in Mexico City that followers in greater numbers began to display their devotion for helping them with relationships and loved ones in prison.

Economic uncertainty and a violent drug war against cartels that has claimed an estimated 70,000 lives also are credited for La Santa Muerte’s growth.

Oscar Hagelsieb, assistant special agent in charge for Homeland Security Investigations in El Paso, said agents have found that most members of the Gulf and Zeta Cartels mainly pray to Santa Muerte while those from the Sinaloa and Sonora Cartels honor folk saint Jesus Malverde.

“Altars are very intricate. We have found some with food and others with blood from animals,” Hagelsieb said.

The association with cartels and denunciations by some priests has resulted in some non-devotees destroying makeshift roadside altars. Recently, assailants smashed a life-size statue of La Santa Muerte in a South Texas cemetery. Police in Pasadena, California recently found human bones at a home with a Santa Muerte altar outside. The owners say they bought the bones online.

But the vast majority of devotees aren’t crooks.

Kiko Torres, owner of the Masks y Mas art store in Albuquerque, said sales of La Santa Muerte statues, incense, and oils have skyrocketed in recent months.

‘Glee’ and ‘Archie’ bridge comics, TV in crossover

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Blaine Anderson and Kevin Keller? Betty Cooper and Noah Puckerman?

Things are not as they usually are in the halls of William McKinley and Riverdale high schools.

And that’s just the way it should be, said Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa, who writes for “Glee” and penned the four-issue story arc, “Archie Meets Glee,” that sees Riverdale and McKinley’s famous—and vocally talented—students come together in a crossover crash that blends the snark of the television show and the longstanding wholesomeness of Archie, Jughead and Betty, among others.

The two worlds combine this week in the pages of “Archie Comics” No. 641, a story drawn by artist Dan Parent that extends through issue 644.

Show creator Ryan Murphy said the story honors and celebrates “the two worlds. Not just their similarities, but their differences, which I’ve think we’ve done.”

So what prompted it? A friendship between Aguirre-Sacasa and Archie Comics co-CEO Jon Goldwater, who met at New York Comic Con in 2011.

“The Archie brand is very versatile and we’re continuing to explore our limits every day,” Goldwater said of the latest crossover.

“How perfectly these worlds mesh and how funny the comparisons are between the characters,” said Aguirre-Sacasa, who was given free rein to tell the story that uses the conventions of wormholes and time warps to place the characters in the different universes.

“The idea was that rather than just have them meet at a competition to do something that was a little bit more comic bookish,” he said, adding that he’s long been a lover of comic books, science fiction and alternate realities.

The kids from both sides will have to figure out how to get home but, in the meantime, why not have some fun?

“Once you got that big story up and running you could tell a lot more little stories. Veronica, for ex-



This comic book image released by Archie Comic Publications, Inc. shows Archie’s character Veronica, left, and Betty, right, with Glee character Artie Abrams on the cover of one of the “Archie Meets Glee,” issues.

ample, sets her eyes on Finn immediately, but Veronica Lodge’s social status is ... at the bottom of the food chain,” Aguirre-Sacasa said, adding that ultimately she and Kurt become best friends.

“And back in Riverdale, when Josie and Pussycats realize that Mercedes Jones has the greatest voice ever, they set out to recruit her for the band,” he said. Kevin Keller, Archie’s first openly gay character, meets Blaine, who’s been “zapped in Riverdale and Kevin is immediately intrigued by this new bow-tie wearing student,” he said.

Then of course, there’s Sue Sylvester, the fast-talking sardonic queen of mean. She’ll square off against Jughead, Aguirre-Sacasa said.

FBI releases its records on Whitney Houston

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The FBI has released its files on a trio of investigations the agency conducted on behalf of Whitney Houston.

The records released Monday show the agency conducted one investigation into an alleged extortion attempt in 1992, but agents and prosecutors determined no crime occurred.

Agents also found no evidence of criminal threats to the singer in fan mail that was sent to the FBI for investigation in 1988 and 1999.

The 128-page file covers the height of the Grammy-winning singer's popularity but does not contain any new personal details.

Records on the FBI's extortion investigation in which Houston was interviewed at



This April 25, 2010 file photo shows U.S. singer Whitney Houston performing at the O2 in London as part of her European tour.

the New Jersey offices of her management company are heavily redacted.

Houston drowned in a hotel bathtub on the eve of the 2012 Grammy Awards.

Heidi Klum new judge on 'America's Got Talent'



This Sept. 23, 2012 file photo shows model Heidi Klum arriving at the 64th Primetime Emmy Awards at the Nokia Theatre in Los Angeles.

NEW YORK (AP)—NBC says Heidi Klum has been added to "America's Got Talent" as its fourth judge.

The network announced Monday that the supermodel will join fellow incoming judge Mel B this summer for the talent competition's eighth season. Howie Mandel and Howard Stern will be back at the judges' panel.

Klum says she's excited to join the show and size up the talent, "from the ridiculous to the fantastic!"

She continues to host the Peabody Award-winning "Project Runway" on Lifetime and Germany's "Next Top Model."

Schwarzenegger to be executive editor of magazines

LOS ANGELES (AP)—He was the Terminator, then a governor, and now Arnold Schwarzenegger is an editor.

The *Los Angeles Times* reports Schwarzenegger has been named executive editor of Muscle & Fitness and Flex magazines.

It's a position that the former

Mr. Olympia held briefly 10 years ago, after winning California's gubernatorial recall election. After being criticized for potential conflict of interest, he quit the job.

The *Times* says Schwarzenegger, who has appeared on the magazines' covers more

than 60 times, will contribute columns and other input.

In a statement, Schwarzenegger says it was publications like Muscle & Fitness and Flex that inspired him to start lifting weights.

The magazines are owned by American Media Inc.

Walters back at 'The View' after weeks on the mend

NEW YORK (AP)—Barbara Walters is back.

Sidelined for six weeks by chickenpox and a concussion, Walters returned to ABC's "The View" on Monday.

She got a thunderous welcome from the studio audience and co-panelists Sherri Shepherd, Elisabeth Hasselbeck and Joy Behar, as well as well-wishers Regis Philbin and New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who stopped by.

"After a lot of scratching and rest, I am fine and I am healthy," the 83-year-old Walters declared.

Lifting her bangs, she pointed on



Walters

her forehead to the only visible signs of her ordeal: a single chickenpox bump and a tiny scar from her fall. Walters was hospitalized Jan. 19 after fainting and hitting her head on a marble floor at a party in Washington. She suffered a concussion and got several stitches.

She had chickenpox and a fever at the time but didn't realize it. The likely cause? Hugging a well-known actor "who shall be nameless" earlier in January, she said. It turned out he had shingles.

"If you have never had chickenpox"—and Walters never had—"you can get it from someone with shingles," she told viewers.

Walters was released from the hospital after 10 days, then took it easy in her New York home. "The chickenpox came and went weeks ago," she told her co-hosts. "The head injury has taken longer, so I rested and I watched the show ... and I was able to scream and yell at you on the screen every day."

Adopted children are product of two different kinds of love

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DEAR ABBY: While cleaning out my attic yesterday, I found a letter that my daughter wrote to you a few years ago when she was 13. She was responding to a poem that had appeared in your column, "Legacy of an Adopted Child."

She was going through a very trying time and was being bullied because she was adopted and looked very different from her parents.

My daughter is grown now and is a delightful, successful young woman. That poem helped her greatly. Can you reprint it for others?



Dear Abby

PROUD MOM IN GREENVILLE, S.C.

DEAR PROUD MOM: With pleasure. The poem is part of my "Keepers" booklet.

LEGACY OF AN ADOPTED CHILD (Author Unknown)

Once there were two women
Who never knew each other.

One you do not remember,
The other you call mother.

Two different lives

Shaped to make yours one.

One became your guiding star,
The other became your sun.

The first gave you life
And the second taught you to live it.

The first gave you a need for love
And the second was there to give it.

One gave you a nationality,
The other gave you a name.

One gave you a seed of talent,
The other gave you an aim.

One gave you emotions,
The other calmed your fears.

One saw your first sweet smile,
The other dried your tears.

One gave you up—

It was all that she could do.

The other prayed for a child

And God led her straight to you.

And now you ask me

Through your tears,

The age-old question

Through the years:

Heredity or environment

Which are you the product of?

Neither, my darling—neither,

Just two different kinds of love.

This poem is part of a collection of poems and essays that readers have repeatedly asked to be re-run because they hold special meaning for them. Some of the items had been saved and re-read so many times that they had fallen apart. Many readers suggested that the special column items be compiled into a booklet, and what resulted is "Keepers." It can be ordered by sending your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price. It's a quick and easy read for anyone who needs a lift, and is filled with down-to-earth nuggets of wisdom, both witty and philosophical. The "Keepers" touch on a variety of subjects and are a welcome gift for newlyweds, new parents, pet lovers or anyone recovering from an illness.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

ENTERTAINMENT TIDBITS

Purdue U. teacher wins \$100,000 poetry prize

CLAREMONT, Calif. (AP)—Marianne Boruch, a Purdue University creative writing teacher, has won this year's \$100,000 Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award, a California university announced Monday. Boruch was honored for her collection, "The Book of Hours," and a ceremony will be held April 18 at Claremont Graduate University east of Los Angeles. "The award is presented for a work by a poet who is past the very beginning but has not yet reached the pinnacle of his or her career," a university statement said. Boruch lives in West Lafayette, Ind., and teaches at Purdue and in the Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College in North Carolina. Her work has appeared in the *New Yorker*, *Paris Review*, the *London Review of Books* and other publications. Heidi Steidlmyer of Vacaville, Calif., won the \$10,000 Kate Tufts Discovery Award for

her book "Fowling Piece." The award is given for a first book by a poet of "genuine promise," the university said.

Holocaust survivor saved by Schindler writes book

NEW YORK (AP)—One of the youngest Holocaust survivors saved by Oskar Schindler has a book deal, for a manuscript completed shortly before he died. Leon Leyson's "The Boy On the Wooden Box" will be published by Atheneum on Aug. 27, the publisher announced Monday. According to Atheneum, the book will provide an "unprecedented perspective" on Schindler, the German industrialist credited with helping to save more than 1,000 Jews during World War II. His story was immortalized in Steven Spielberg's Oscar-winning "Schindler's List." Leyson became a popular speaker who traveled nationwide to tell his

story of life under the Nazis. He was 13 when Schindler rescued him from a Polish ghetto. He settled in California after the war and died at age 83 in January, the day after Atheneum received his manuscript.

Brody Jenner joins Kardashians' reality show

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Brody Jenner is joining the cast of "Keeping Up With the Kardashians." The E! network says the 29-year-old son of Bruce Jenner will appear on season eight of the popular reality show. Brody Jenner has made cameo appearances on the program previously. The show follows the grown Kardashian kids, their half-sisters Kylie and Kendall Jenner, and their parents Bruce and Kris Jenner as they navigate business and fame. Brody Jenner said Monday that he's looking forward to "getting to know (his) extended family a little better." Season eight is

set to premiere in June.

Copperfield plane lands after 'frightening' sound

PEORIA, Illinois (AP)—A private plane carrying magician David Copperfield made a "frightening" sound en route from Las Vegas to New York and had to land about halfway there. Peoria International Airport officials say Copperfield's plane landed in Illinois after it began experiencing problems early Monday. The (Peoria) Journal Star reports that Copperfield was supposed to appear live on NBC but ended up filming the interview remotely. The famed illusionist told NBC that the plane made crackling noises at 37,000 feet (11,275 meters) that he recorded on his cellphone. He says he "kind of freaked out." He also Tweeted that the incident was "so scary." Copperfield later took a commercial flight back to Las Vegas.

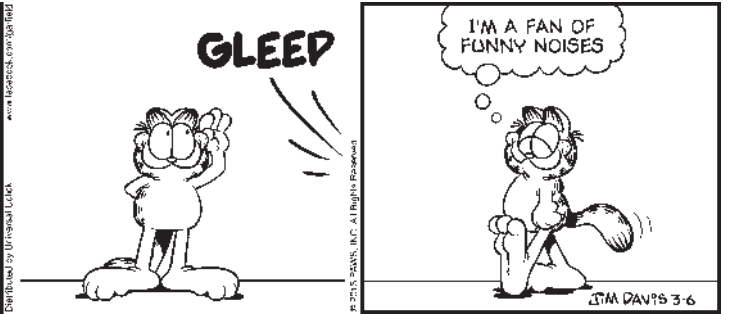
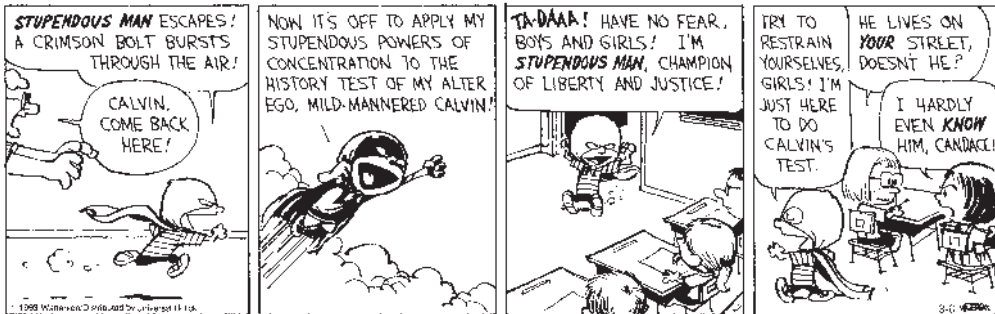
Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

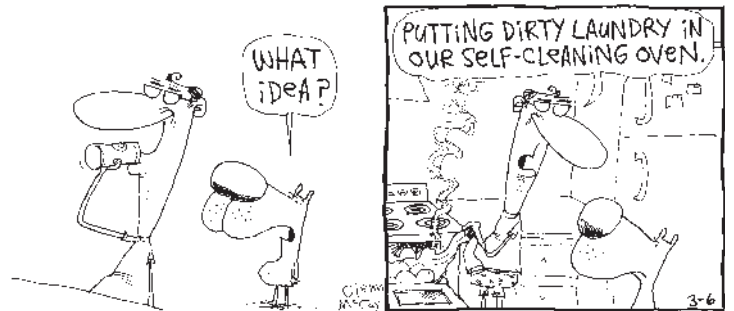
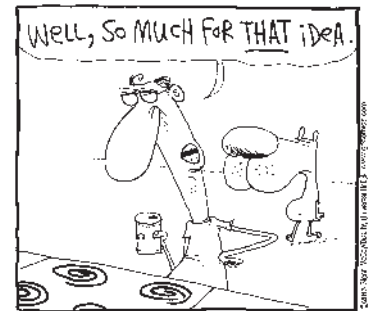
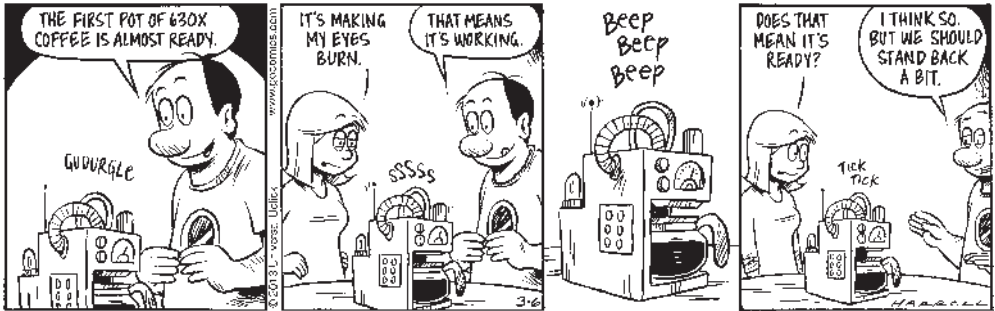


Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

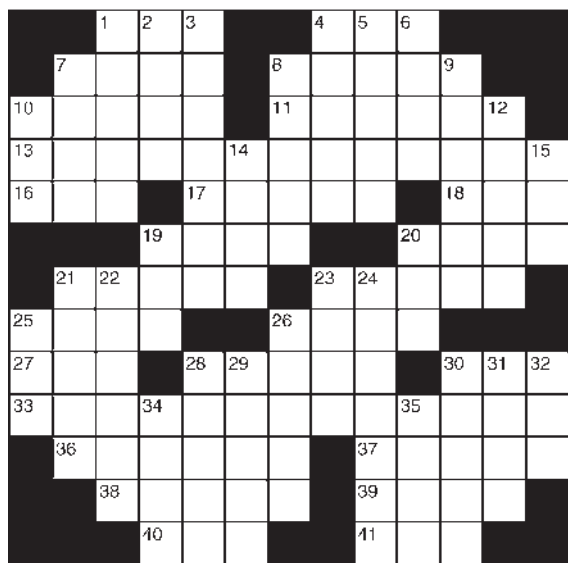
By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	27 Pooch	DOWN	12 Heron's
1 Sleuth,	28 Paris	1 Layers	kin
slangily	river	2 Hit.	14 Swindles
4 Pod	30 Cleo-	3 Sneer-	15 Recede
dweller	patra's	ingly	19 "This
7 Crafty	slayer	doubtful	means
8 Equilibri-	33 Navy,	4 — de	—"
um	with	Leon	20 Urban
10 Overuse	"The"	5 Square	transport
the	36 Seriously	dance	21 Egg-
mirror	loyal	quorum	shaped
11 Motor	37 Mada-	6 Europe's	22 Pirate
13 Fee	gascar	neigh-	costume
for	critter	bor	feature
work	38 Sur-	7 Small	23 Sheet
done	rounds	songbird	of
16 Office-	39 Thing	8 Annoy-	glass
holders	40 CSA	ance	24 Ohio
17 Break	boss	9 Sign	college
a Com-	41 Affirma-	up	25 Billboards
mand-	tive	10 Greek	26 Rosters
ment	action?	letter	28 Sleep
18 Sphere			soundly?
19 Diminish			29 Chopin
20 Small			piece
blister			30 Picked
21 Milky			a
stones			target
23 Young			31 Pond
turkey			gunk
25 Profess			32 Apiece
26 Science			34 Satan's
work-			forte
shops			35 Kill a bill

Solution time: 21 mins.

M	I	S	O	L	A	D	A	M	I	D
I	D	Y	L	I	C	E	R	E	D	O
R	E	N	D	V	A	C	C	I	N	E
V	A	C	A	T	E	D	I	O	U	S
A	N	N	E	X	R	A	Y	O	V	A
T	E	E	H	E	X	I	S	O		
M	E	D	E	V	A	C	I	I	E	I
S	A	Y	W	I	G					
A	M	A	S	S	V	A	C	U	U	M
V	A	C	A	T	I	O	N	A	S	I
E	M	Y	D	I	E	N	E	T	S	
R	E	E	S	O	D	D	A	D	E	S

Yesterday's answer 3-6



STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Shaquille O'Neal, 41; Connie Britton, 46; D.L. Hughley, 50; Rob Reiner, 66.

Happy Birthday: Make improvements that will help you feel good as well as enhance what you have to offer. Embrace change and make it work for you instead of wasting time trying to hang on to something or someone that isn't meant to be. Forward motion will keep you in sync and lead to success. Love is on the rise. Your numbers are 4, 13, 25, 29, 31, 39, 41.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Research will pay off. Ease your stress by putting a plan into motion. Don't let your emotions lead you into a no-win situation with someone you work with. Rely on past experience to help you avoid making a mistake. **

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Plan to excel. Interact with people that have something to contribute. The more information you obtain, the easier it will be secure your position or find a way to advance. A serious partnership will develop. ****

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Make your own deals. You cannot trust anyone to do what's best for you. Asking for a favor is likely to end up costing you. Keep your private life a secret. Sharing too much information with colleagues or peers will cause setbacks. ***

CANCER (June 21-July 22): You have more clout than you realize. Call the shots and set the standard. Ask for what you want and offer what you feel is fair. Romance

is on the rise and celebrating should be planned. Opportunities are apparent. ***

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Take care of financial matters and fix up your place to suit your needs. Having the right equipment at your fingertips will make your life easier as well as help you avoid wasting time. A change of pace will encourage business. ***

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Enjoy friends and take part in activities that build your enthusiasm and make you think. Romance is heading your way, and decisions that influence your future are about to unfold. A promise made will help seal a deal. ****

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): A change of heart is apparent, but don't let that affect the way you do your job. You'll realize you are further ahead than you think, and there is no need to jump into something prematurely. You need new surroundings. **

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Get involved in something creative and challenging, and you will face a fascinating test of your ability. You will not only be pleased with your accomplishments, but you will impress someone and secure a position for future projects. ****

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Take a back seat and gauge what everyone else does or says. You will get the best results by sticking close to home and making the most of your living space. Keep your thoughts about others to yourself. Avoid overindulgence. ***

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Reflect on past relationships and you will know exactly what to say to someone you love. A simple and affordable approach will bring the best results. Romance is in the stars and can be achieved on a budget. ***

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): What you do for others will in turn allow you to do something that will make you happy as well. Favors will be repaid, enabling you to make a change that will allow you greater freedom to follow your goals. ***

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): You'll have a choice. Wager the pros and cons and you'll find a way to get what you want without going overboard physically, financially or emotionally. Your talent and skill will help you win a spot in the limelight. ****

Birthday Baby: You are sensitive, impulsive and dedicated. You are clever and entertaining.

Eugenia's website—eugenialast.com, Eugenia's android app @ <http://bit.ly/exhoro> and join Eugenia on [twitter/facebook/linkedin](https://twitter.com/eugenialast).

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

				5				
			6		4			
		3				4		
		4		2		1		
	9	7				5	2	
2	3	1		6		7	4	9
		5				3		
	4	8	5		2	6	7	
6	7			1			5	2

Difficulty Level ★★

3/06

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

1	2	6	4	3	9	5	7	8
7	9	3	2	5	8	6	4	1
4	8	5	1	7	6	2	3	9
3	7	4	6	9	5	1	8	2
9	1	2	3	8	4	7	5	6
6	5	8	7	1	2	4	9	3
2	6	9	8	4	7	3	1	5
5	3	7	9	6	1	8	2	4
8	4	1	5	2	3	9	6	7

Difficulty Level ★★

3/05

WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

PHOTO BOOTH

Solution: 5 letters

C	B	E	E	H	D	I	G	I	T	A	L	L	A	M
A	O	V	X	L	C	N	T	N	E	M	Y	A	P	I
M	O	I	C	I	N	A	N	A	I	P	E	S	R	
E	T	T	N	D	I	M	E	P	A	R	E	N	T	R
R	H	A	N	O	E	T	S	B	I	T	T	F	R	O
A	E	E	O	I	P	O	E	N	E	C	S	O	I	R
E	V	R	R	M	A	E	T	M	A	E	T	N	P	S
F	A	C	T	A	U	T	R	L	E	P	P	U	I	S
F	S	F	A	C	E	S	R	A	I	N	P	S	R	K
E	S	O	P	H	A	R	I	U	T	G	T	I	R	E
C	Y	L	L	I	S	P	A	N	C	H	E	A	N	E
T	S	I	G	N	A	L	T	P	G	N	D	T	I	G
S	F	R	I	E	N	D	S	U	E	L	N	U	G	A
K	C	A	L	B	U	Z	Z	E	R	R	E	R	E	M
Y	S	U	N	S	E	T	H	E	M	E	P	N	B	I

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3/8

Beeps, Begin, Bench, Black, Booth, Buzzer, Camera, Capture, Coin, Creative, Curtain, Dark, Digital, Effects, Excitement, Faces, Friends, Image, Instant, Light, Machine, Mail, Mirrors, Operated, Patron, Payment, Picture, Pose, Prepare, Print, Rent, Save, Seat, Sepia, Signal, Silly, Single, Smile, Snapping, Spot, Strip, Sunset, Theme, Turn, Vending, Video

Yesterday's Answer: Japanese

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Ravens QB Flacco signs NFL's richest contract

OWINGS MILLS, Md. (AP)—Joe Flacco knows his stature as the highest-paid player in NFL history may not last for long, and he's OK with it.

What matters most to the Super Bowl MVP is that the Baltimore Ravens were willing to pay him that kind of money in the first place.

Flacco signed his new contract Monday worth \$120.6 million over six years. He will receive a \$29 million signing bonus, \$52 million in guaranteed money and \$51 million over the first two years of the deal.

The former first-round draft pick out of Delaware is the first starting quarterback in NFL history to make the playoffs in each of his first five seasons. He's led the Ravens to nine wins over that span, tying Tom Brady for most among quarterbacks in the first five years of a career.

Flacco threw 11 touchdown passes and no interceptions during the recent postseason and led Baltimore to a 34-31 Super Bowl win over San Francisco.

And it all made the Ravens willing to pay him more money than Aaron Rodgers, Peyton Manning, Drew Brees or any other of the great quarterbacks in the game today.

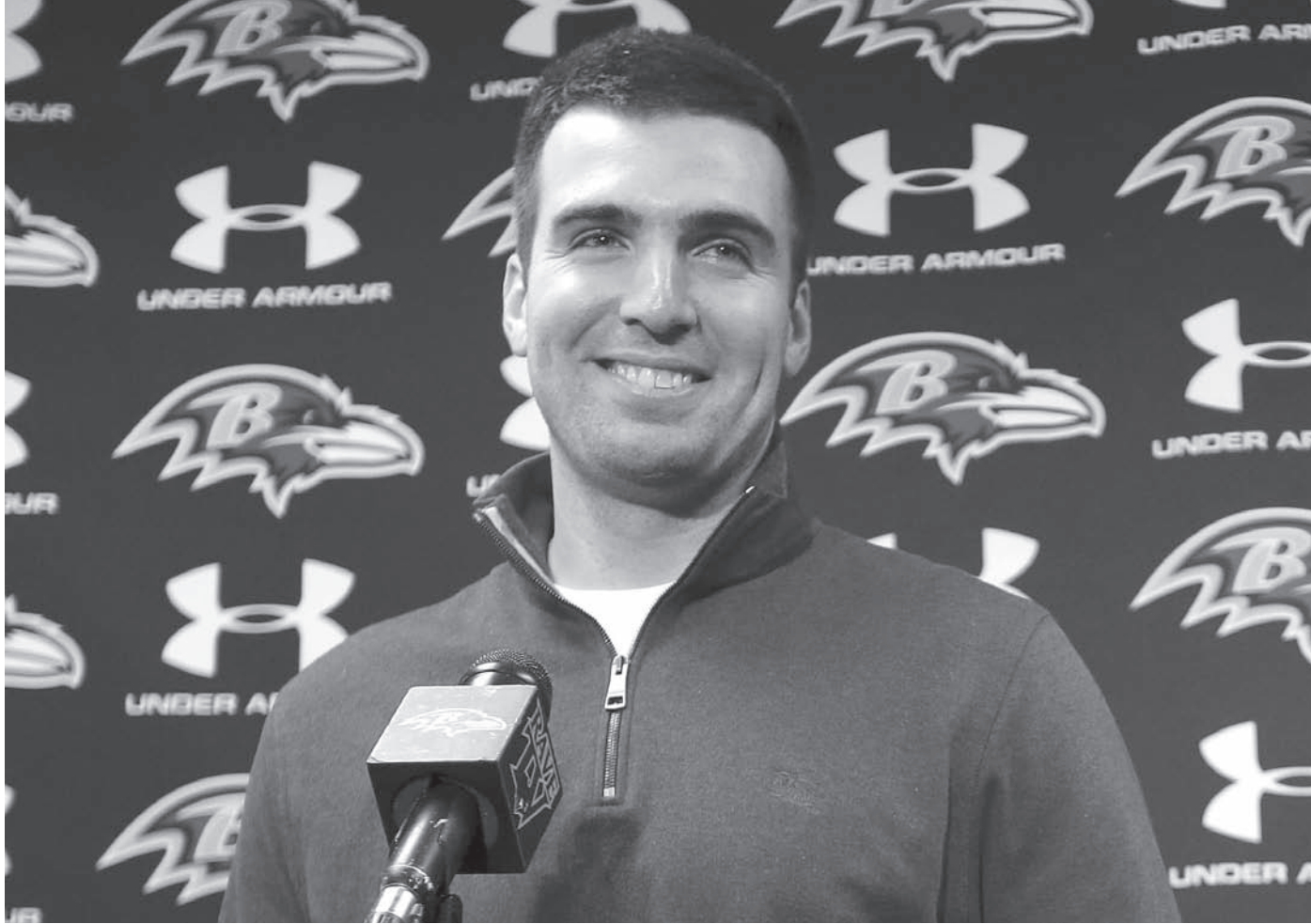
"When guys that are drafted in the first round, when guys that win football games for you, quarterbacks like that, when the time comes up for those guys to get paid, they usually become the highest paid guy in the league," Flacco said. "I'm sure in a couple of months from now, someone is going to sign a deal, and you guys are going to be talking to them about how they are the highest paid guy in NFL history. That's just the name of the game."

"I know that this isn't going to hold up for that long, but that's not a priority of mine to be the highest-paid guy. The priority of mine was to get that respect that I felt, that I feel now from this organization."

Flacco is the quarterback the Ravens have longed to have for years, and they weren't about to let him get away.

"We just returned from the (scouting) combine, and I remember the days of going there and studying and hoping that one of the quarterbacks could be our guy. ... We've been out in that desert before," Ravens general manager Ozzie Newsome said. "That all changed when we drafted Joe in 2008, and now we've secured him for many more years. He's a significant reason we've been to the playoffs five years in a row, played in three AFC championship games, and now, we are Super Bowl champs with Joe as MVP."

Flacco's performance this past offseason almost certainly helped him receive his record-breaking contract. But the quarterback thought he was good



Baltimore Ravens quarterback Joe Flacco speaks at a news conference at the team's practice facility in Owings Mills, Md., Monday, March 4, 2013.

enough to receive all that money before he threw three touchdown passes against the 49ers.

"Listen, winning the Super

Bowl, winning the Super Bowl MVP doesn't make me as valuable as I am," he said. "I think I bring to the table what I bring

to the table. I think I'm an asset to this team, and I'm worth what I'm worth. The fact that we won the Super Bowl just comes with

that. If we didn't win the Super Bowl this year, I still think I'm worth the same, and I still think I'm the same person to this or-

ganization. It may not be seen that way, but that's the bottom line. I still think I give the team the best chance to win moving forward."

By signing Monday, Flacco avoided receiving the franchise tag, which would have hindered the Ravens' salary cap in 2013.

"I know we have a lot of good players on the team, and I love to play with those guys, so hopefully it works out very good for the organization and we can keep as many people as we need," he said.

Flacco turned down a contract before the 2012 season that would have paid him roughly \$15 million a year. His decision turned out to be a wise one.

"I thought I was worth more and didn't really see any circumstances where I wouldn't end up getting paid more than what they were willing to give me at that point," Flacco said.

That assessment was as precise as one of his many sharp spirals in the Super Bowl.

"The real risk is that I could get hurt," he said. "I always kind of had faith that we were going to get something done here no matter what. I didn't know if we were going to go win the Super Bowl and all of that, so that kind of helped the situation out, I think, a little bit."

Jets GM: Docs say Revis' rehab 'ahead of schedule'

NEW YORK (AP)—Darrelle Revis is moving closer to getting back on the football field.

Whether that's with the New York Jets next season remains to be seen.

Jets general manager John Idzik said during a conference call with season ticket holders Monday that there is encouraging news from doctors on Revis' rehabilitation from a torn ligament in his left knee.

"By all accounts, by his doctor's accounts, he's doing very well," Idzik said. "By their estimation, he's ahead of schedule."

But Idzik wouldn't address the cornerback's murky contract situation.

"Darrelle is a very valued player on our team," he said. "Our focus is squarely on getting him healthy, getting him back to his level of play."

Idzik and coach Rex Ryan answered about 20 questions during the 30-minute conference call. Several were about the status of Revis, who is recovering

from knee surgery that sidelined him for most of last season and has been the subject of rampant trade rumors.

Ryan denied those suggestions last month at the NFL combine in Indianapolis, and did so again Monday.

"I will stand firm by saying there was no truth to that," Ryan said.

Revis is entering the final year of his contract, but wants to be among the league's highest-paid defensive players. The Jets are balancing the desire to keep one of the franchise's best players and being financially smart. If they believe they won't be able to sign him next offseason, they would be more apt to try to get something—presumably high draft picks—for him in a deal rather than lose him for nothing.

In an interview with Seattle fullback Michael Robinson for "The Real Robinson Report," posted on YouTube on Monday night, Revis said the trade rumors "definitely hit home."

He was also asked specifically about the possibility of being traded to San Francisco, one of the teams rumored to be interested. "I would just be an addition to help them win that trophy," Revis said. "Would it be awesome? Yeah. My main goal as a player, and I think of all of us players in the NFL, is to hold that Lombardi Trophy up in the air and wear that ring."

Idzik wouldn't reveal plans for Tim Tebow, and appeared to hint that the quarterback could be in the mix at the position this offseason. But, Tebow is still expected to be traded or released in the coming weeks after one disappointing season in which he spent most of his time on the sideline—even as starter Mark Sanchez struggled and was later benched.

"He's currently on our roster," Idzik said of Tebow. "What we're doing is we're trying to increase competition at that position and positions across the board, so we're going to let the competition

play out. We're going to see who we're able to bring on board and let it play out this offseason and into training camp."

"So I think that'll be healthy for all concerned, including Tim."

The Jets have been in talks with veteran David Garrard, and plan to keep Sanchez, who is guaranteed \$8.25 million this season. Greg McElroy and Matt Simms will also be in the competition, and New York could still sign another free agent or draft a young quarterback.

But, it's unlikely Tebow will be on the roster once the Jets begin offseason workouts. The Jets, by mentioning Tebow, could also be trying to build a trade market for him since most believe New York will end up cutting him.

In other topics:

■ Ryan was asked if the Jets might consider doing HBO's "Hard Knocks" again: "We don't anticipate this year."

■ After cutting veteran line-

backers Bart Scott and Calvin Pace, safety Eric Smith and offensive tackle Jason Smith, Idzik was asked if the Jets would consider bringing any of them back. "I don't think we ever shut the door on anything, especially your own players," he said. Ryan did indicate that second-year linebacker Demario Davis would replace Scott as the starter at middle linebacker.

■ Idzik said the team has spoken to representatives for their potential unrestricted free agents, a list that includes safeties Jeremiah Bell and LaRon Landry, running back Shonn Greene, defensive lineman Mike DeVito and tight end Dustin Keller. Idzik added that the team would like to retain right tackle Austin Howard, scheduled to become a restricted free agent.

■ Ryan believes the Jets can still attract star players in free agency despite their struggles the last two seasons. "The New York Jets are a team many players want to play for - if not all," he said.

Leg injury cuts short female kicker's NFL tryout

FLORHAM PARK, N.J. (AP)—Frustrated and maybe a bit embarrassed, Lauren Silberman fought back tears after kicking her way into NFL history.

She became the first woman to try out at a regional combine Sunday, but she lasted all of two kicks—none of which traveled even 20 yards. The 28-year-old Silberman hurt her right quadriceps while preparing for the try-

out earlier in the week, and attributed her struggles to that injury.

"I tried staying off it and waited for today," she said. "I didn't even take kicks in warm-ups, and, it's pretty hard to know that you'll be in pain, and I wanted to work through it and I certainly tried to, but I just couldn't do it today."

While some fans on Twitter praised her for breaking through

in a male-dominated sport, others wondered if this was just a publicity stunt. Regardless, the NFL got plenty of attention on a Sunday in March for one of its regional combines—something most media normally ignore.

"I'm just really happy I had this amazing experience," Silberman said. "I might be the first woman trying out for the NFL, but I certainly hope I'm

not the last."

With the 36 other kickers—all male—a handful of scouts and more than two dozen media watching in complete silence at the New York Jets' practice facility, Silberman winced as she attempted her first kickoff and the ball traveled only 19 yards.

She grabbed at her right leg, and then struggled for about 20 seconds to place the football on

the tee before measuring her steps and trying a second kick.

It went about 13 yards.

She then asked to see a trainer and left the practice field, and appeared to be favoring her right leg.

"They certainly didn't go as far as they were in practices," Silberman said, "but I tried to work through the pain."

She wouldn't reveal how long her kicks were in the weeks leading up to the tryout.

Wade, James lead Heat to record 15th straight win

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Alonzo Mourning never did it. Shaquille O'Neal didn't, either. Even Dwyane Wade had never won 15 games in a row as a member of the Miami Heat.

The Heat have had their fair share of stars come through South Beach over the last 25 years, none of them as bright as LeBron James.

Wade had 32 points, 10 assists and seven rebounds, James shrugged off a sore left knee to score 20 points and grab 10 rebounds, and the Heat earned their franchise-record 15th straight victory with a 97-81 win over the Minnesota Timberwolves on Monday night.

"Any time you get an opportunity set a record, it's great for the organization and the guys involved," James said. "But we want to keep going. We want to keep winning each game by itself. We don't talk about the streak, we just go to the next game and play it out. We look forward to the next one."

Chris Bosh added 11 points and nine rebounds, and James played 35 minutes despite being listed as a game-time decision with a twisted left knee.

Derrick Williams had 25 points and 10 rebounds and Ricky Rubio had 14 points, eight assists, six steals and five rebounds for the Timberwolves. J.J. Barea had four points on 1-for-11 shooting and was ejected in the fourth quarter after getting a Flagrant-2 foul for a hit on Heat guard Ray Allen.

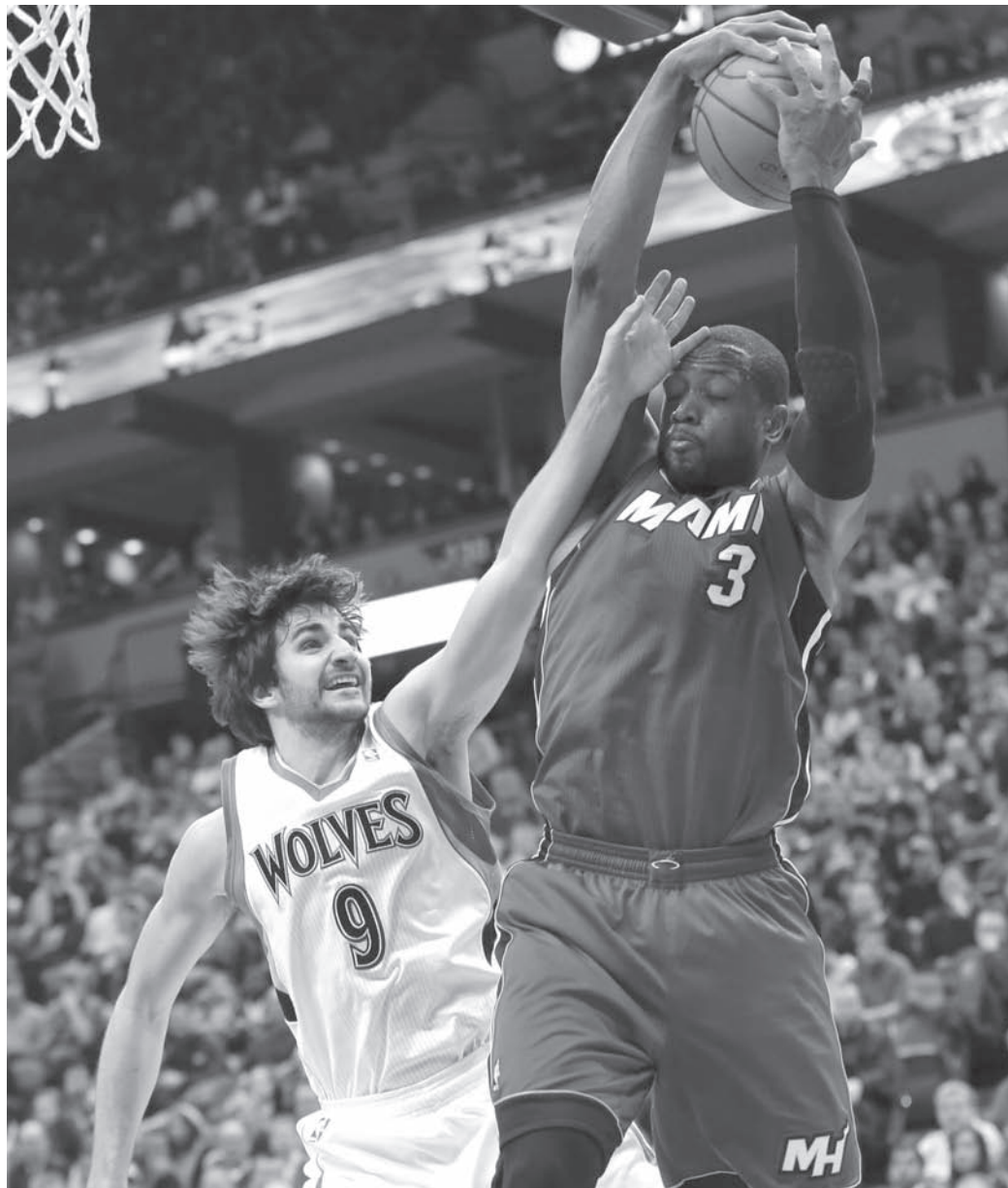
Minnesota was down six points with eight minutes to play when Barea was ejected. The Heat then went on a 17-5 run to put away the game.

Officials initially ruled it a Flagrant 1, but changed the call upon reviewing it, eliciting strong protests from Barea and Wolves coach Rick Adelman, who also picked up a technical foul. Adelman was furious after the game, alluding to an incident two weeks ago against Golden State in which Wolves center Greg Stiemsma was hit in the chest by a forearm shiver from Jarrett Jack, but was given a Flagrant-1 and allowed to keep playing.

"I just have one question I want to ask the league," Adelman said. "Why is that a Flagrant-2 foul to-night and the other night Jarrett Jack hit Stiemsma in the stomach with a forearm that that was a Flagrant 1? I would just like to know the difference. That changed the whole game."

Allen immediately got up from the foul and rushed at Barea, but players from both sides stepped in and broke up the confrontation.

"It just came out of nowhere," Allen said. "I was dribbling down the floor, it was a play where he kind of chucked me a little bit and knocked the ball away. I got it back and drove and he just leveled me. I thought it was uncalled for. There's no



Miami Heat's Dwyane Wade, right, hangs onto the ball after being fouled by Minnesota Timberwolves' Ricky Rubio of Spain in the second half of an NBA basketball game Monday, March 4, 2013, in Minneapolis.

place for that in this game."

Barea was jawing at Allen as he left the court and said he expected the league to change the call on Tuesday.

"I've been playing in the NBA for seven years," Barea said. "I get hit harder than that every night. I don't get up crying and want to fight."

The Heat outscored Minnesota 58-32 in the paint, amassing 24 dunks or layups out of 38 total field goals.

The Heat had every reason to sit James down in this one, and the runaway favorite for MVP wouldn't have been blamed. The Heat were playing the second game of a road back-to-back, coming off a stirring victory over New York and playing an undermanned opponent that had lost 21 of its last 25 games.

Maybe in the past, James would have. But not this year. He's reached a different level, one that no one has been able to compete with, whether he is completely healthy or not. He knows more is expected of him, and he is delivering every single night.

"His leg would probably have to fall off for him to miss a game," Bosh said.

James tweaked his knee in the third quarter against New York on Sunday when he landed awkwardly while chasing down a lob pass. That didn't stop him from scoring 12 points and swatting Tyson Chandler in the fourth quarter to lead the Heat to their first win of the season over the Knicks, an important victory

for the defending champions to assert themselves in the Eastern Conference.

His knee was examined once the team arrived in Minnesota and no serious damage was found. The Timberwolves had a faint glimmer of hope when James was nowhere to be found when the Heat took the floor about 15 minutes before tipoff. But he came jogging out a few minutes later, then continued his recent pre-game routine of throwing down monster dunks to get that knee loosened up and ready to roll.

"My knee responded well from that fall yesterday," James said. "I'm blessed. It's nothing really, a little jam when I landed on the floor."

The dunking display kept right on going after the opening tip. Without big Nikola Pekovic (abdominal strain) roaming the paint, the Heat relentlessly attacked the rim. Their first seven field goals came on dunks or layups, as did 15 of their 20 buckets in the first half.

The Wolves made a mini-run, pulling to 76-70 before the Barea-Allen confrontation, and the Heat pulled away after that.

It's not as if the Heat have been feasting on cupcakes during their record streak. They've taken down the Clippers, Lakers, Rockets, Thunder, Bulls, Grizzlies and Knicks, almost all of them in convincing fashion.

The message is being delivered. This is their time. This is LeBron's league.

You want the title? Come

and get it.

Knicks 102, Cavaliers 97

In Cleveland, Amare Stoudemire scored 22 points, J.R. Smith added 18 and New York overcame a 22-point deficit without All-Star Carmelo Anthony to beat Cleveland.

Steve Novak made three of New York's seven 3-pointers in the fourth quarter as the Knicks rallied and shook off a tough home loss on Sunday, when they blew a 16-point lead to Miami.

The Knicks trailed 52-30 in the second quarter of this one when Anthony injured his right knee. He stumbled and fell awkwardly after catching a pass and did not return.

Kyrie Irving scored 22 points in his return after missing Cleveland's past three games with a hyperextended right knee.

Magic 105, Hornets 102

In New Orleans, Arron Afflalo

scored five of his game-high 26 points in the final 38 seconds, and Orlando snapped a three-game skid.

Jameer Nelson, returning from a left knee injury that sidelined him six games, scored 15 points and Tobias Harris also scored 15 for Orlando, which trailed by as many as 17 points in the second half and erased a nine-point deficit during the final 3:15.

Afflalo scored 11 of his points in the fourth quarter, including an 11-foot turnaround over Eric Gordon in the lane that gave Orlando the lead for good at 101-100.

Afflalo hit two free throws soon after to make it 103-100, but found himself back on the free-throw line in a one-point game with 12 seconds left after Anthony Davis' tip-in made it 103-102.

Afflalo missed his second of two free throws, but Harris got the offensive rebound and hit one of two free throws to make it a three-point game with 10.6 seconds left.

Bucks 109, Jazz 108, OT

In Milwaukee, Monta Ellis scored 34 points, Brandon Jennings added 20 points and 17 assists, and Milwaukee beat Utah in overtime.

J.J. Redick scored 17 for the Bucks, including their first eight in overtime. Milwaukee won its fourth consecutive game after dropping three in a row following the All-Star break.

Larry Sanders chipped in with eight points, 16 rebounds and six blocked shots for Milwaukee.

Derrick Favors tied a career high with 23 points and added 15 rebounds for Utah, which lost for the fourth time in five games. Paul Millsap had 22 points and 14 rebounds, Alec Burks added 19 points and Enes Kanter had 18 points.

Nuggets 104, Hawks 88

In Denver, Corey Brewer scored 22 points and Ty Lawson had 18 in Denver's win over Atlanta.

The Nuggets won their 11th straight game at the Pepsi Center and matched Miami's NBA-best 26-3 home record, but for most of three quarters it wasn't the cakewalk many expected against a banged-up, tired team playing the final game of a six-game trip.

Eventually, they ran out of

gas and bodies, though.

Al Horford scored 18 points for Atlanta, and Josh Smith chipped in 15 points, becoming the 24th player in league history to collect 10,000 points, 5,000 rebounds, 2,000 assists and 1,000 blocks. His milestone came on a night when many of his teammates were spectators as the Hawks were without Kyle Korver (toe), Zaza Pachulia (sore right Achilles) and DeShawn Stevenson, who skipped the second game of this back-to-back like he normally does because of balky knees.

Trail Blazers 122, Bobcats 105

In Portland, Oregon, LaMarcus Aldridge had 23 points and 14 rebounds, and Portland handed Charlotte its seventh straight loss.

Nicolas Batum and Damian Lillard each finished with 20 points for the Blazers, who had seven players in double figures and shot nearly 60 percent from the field. Meyers Leonard, Portland's 7-foot rookie center, came off the bench to score a season-high 15 points.

Ramon Sessions had 18 points off the bench for the Bobcats, who have an NBA-low 13 wins this season. Rookie Michael Kidd-Gilchrist had 17 points.

Warriors 125, Raptors 118

In Oakland, California, David Lee had 29 points and 11 rebounds to back Andrew Bogut's strong return, and Golden State snapped a four-game losing streak by outlasting Toronto.

Stephen Curry added 26 points and tied a season high with 12 assists, and Klay Thompson scored 10 of his 22 points in the fourth quarter to help the Warriors pull away with a 9-0 run late. Bogut had four points and eight rebounds in a season-high 30 minutes after missing the last six games because of a bad back.

Andrea Bargnani scored 26 points and tied a career high with five 3-pointers, and Amir Johnson added 23 points and 15 rebounds in Toronto's fifth straight loss. Kyle Lowry finished with 11 points, 11 rebounds and nine assists, and Rudy Gay scored 26 points after missing the Raptors' loss at Milwaukee on Saturday night with back spasms.

Yankees GM Cashman breaks leg skydiving



TAMPA, Fla.

(AP)—Yankees general manager Brian Cashman broke his right leg and dislocated the ankle while skydiving in Florida.

Cashman jumped with the U.S. Army Golden Knights in a plane from Homestead Air Reserve Base outside Miami, a fundraiser for the Wounded Warrior Project. He was hurt on his second jump Monday.

The Yankees said X-rays at Homestead Hospital revealed a broken fibula and dislocated ankle. Cashman was scheduled for surgery later in the day with Dr. Dominic Carreira at Broward Health Medical Center.

"I'm in great spirits, and it was an awesome experience," Cashman said in a statement. "The Golden Knights are first class. While I certainly didn't intend to raise awareness in ex-

actly this fashion, I'm extremely happy that the Wounded Warrior Project is getting the well-deserved additional attention."

The 45-year-old, who has been the team's GM since February 1998, also has rappelled down a 350-foot, 22-story building in Stamford, Conn., sometimes dressed in an elf's costume the past three Decembers as part of the town's "Heights and Lights" celebration.

ROP 14 features bantamweight title brawl, 14 other bouts

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

Trench Tech Purebred Promotions' Rites of Passage 14 Mayhem! is set for April 19 at Saipan World Resort's Royal Taga Ballroom.

As of last Friday, ROP 14 banners 15 bouts rounding off with a Saipan versus Guam co-main event where current

► Team Zeng Zung's Renz "The Intense" Benghit, seen here throwing a punch in a file photo, will take on Countershot Guam's Sonny Chargualaf in a K-1 kickboxing match in Rites of Passage 14: Mayhem! on April 19 at Saipan World Resort's Royal Taga Ballroom. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



bantamweight champion Josh "The Hedgehog" Alvarez out of Guam's Spike 22 will put his title on the line against Trench Tech's Vince "The Clinch" Masga.

It will be followed by the final main event where middleweights Martin "Ning-Bo Slice" Cepeda of Trench Tech squares off against Mikey Taitano of Spike 22.

The rest of the card lists eight mixed martial arts bouts along with a handful of K-1 kickboxing escapades to get things rolling.

The MMA undercard matches include, former bantamweight champ Mark "The Dark" Nunique of Trench Tech lining up across Marianas Elite bantamweight Derrick "El Peligro" Rangamar; Tinian's Pete "The

Beast" Cepeda (Team Zeng Zung) pitted against Guam's Ryan "The Predator" Toves in a lightweight affair; Danny "The Truth" Santos versus Eric "Superman" Villanueva ; Zalaka's Jacob "One Blow" Ilo taking on independent bantamweight Jesus Mafnas; Garry "Dissa" Ray colliding with Mat Fisher in a catch weight bout set at 140 lbs, Team Legit's Leo Mendiola versus Countershot Guam's Jared "Smiley Faced" Santos at 115 lbs; and Trench Tech's Seong Ho Chung stepping in against Sid Nepaial in a bantamweight tiff.

The K-1 kickboxing lineup features a bantamweight duel between Tinian's red hot Regino "The Kid" Mundo

(Team Zeng Zung) and Spike 22's Ricky Camp; Counter-shot Guam's decorated veteran Sonny Chargualaf returning to take on Tinian up-and-comer Renz "The Intense" Benghit, of Zeng Zung; Pete "Project K" Keju versus Guam Muay Thai's Kevin "The Bull" Camacho at 175 lbs; Francisco "Ko" Palacios squaring off against Guam Muay Thai's Chris Wise at 165 lbs; and Trench Tech's Donovan "Track Star" Mendiola versus Guam Muay Thai's Gene Devera at 150 lbs.

All details above are tentative and fights are subject to change; tickets go on sale soon.

Contact Trench Tech president Cuki Alvarez at 483-4MMA (4662) for more information.

XTERRA

From Page 28

are Rory Downie of Scotland and Carina Wasle of Austria.

Acting Taga, Inc. president Brad Ruzsala echoed Sakovich's statement, saying this year's race will be one of the most exciting ones in the XTERRA Saipan history.

"You have former champions hungry to regain their title, a defending champion on a mission, and a bunch of newcomers who want to make a good impression in the Crown Jewel of XTERRA World Tour," Ruzsala said.

Gardner and Marceau are former XTERRA Saipan cham-

pions with the UK bet winning from 2009 to 2011 before missing last year's race. Marceau holds the most men's division crowns in XTERRA Saipan, prevailing from 2004 to 2007. After missing the race for four straight seasons, the two-time Olympian came back last year, but fell short, losing to Allen by less than a minute. Marceau completed the 1.5-kilometer swim, 32K bike, and 12K in 2:31:44 against Allen's 2:31:05.

With Allen having a slim winning time, the Australian pro is out to prove that his debut win in XTERRA Saipan was no fluke. A victory in XTERRA Saipan will also move Allen one win away from completing another XTERRA Triple Crown.

Gardner and Marceau are not the only threats to Allen, but also Hugo, who is making a comeback in the XTERRA World Tour this year after missing the XTERRA World last season. The South African placed runner-up in 2011 XTERRA World, is among the favorites in this year's XTERRA World in Maui. In the Philippines, Hugo timed in at 2:38:31, just less than a minute behind Allen's 2:37:40 despite having two flat tires and getting involved in a crash.

Hugo's compatriot Weiss came in at fifth at 2:48:46, just 25 seconds behind Gardner, and about eight minutes ahead of Marceau (2:56:54). Downie placed seventh with a time of 3:12:06.

In the women's field, Wasle and Slack are out to redeem themselves in XTERRA Saipan after catching bad breaks in XTERRA Philippines. Slack had problems with her bike and dropped to fourth behind winner Lesley Patterson (2:45:41), Bucher (3:00:03), and Parker (3:17:03), while Wasle failed to finish the race also due to bike troubles. The Austrian nearly pulled out in last year's XTERRA Saipan after a bad crash and exhaustion in the run leg.

Meanwhile, the 10 visiting pros and former Saipan resident Mieko Carey are among the more than 70 athletes competing in this weekend's event.

Several others are still expected to register before the week ends.

With triathletes biking and running on Saipan this week, organizers are advising motorists and pedestrians to take extra caution. Organizers also request residents to put their dogs on a leash.

XTERRA Scramble, Kids

Meanwhile, the XTERRA Scramble 5K/10K will be held this Saturday at 5pm.

Registration is at 4pm on the race site and the course will be around the American Memorial Park. Proceeds from the event will go to Northern Marianas Athletics.

Then this Saturday, XTERRA Kids will be held at 7:30am, also at AMP. The event is free for kids in the U10 age group.

For more information, contact Ruzsala at 287-2723 or send email to bradinthinand96950@yahoo.com.

CNMI

From Page 28

in Maldives.

The CNMI, which also suffered a 0-6 shutout loss to Nepal, will close out its first AFC men's tournament against Bangladesh today at 2:0pm (6:05pm) Saipan time. Bangladesh, which fell to Palestine last Saturday, 0-1, bounced back in its second game, downing Nepal, 2-0.

Before the Nepal-Bangladesh clash, the CNMI-Palestine tiff was first played with Salem breaking the ice in the 7th min-

ute. After the Al-Fursan's early goal, the Blue Ayuyus held their ground on defense for more than 10 minutes before Palestine got its second goal courtesy of Abuhabib shot in the 21st. Atiya made it a 3-0 count two minutes later and Palestine went into the dugout with a 4-0 halftime lead off Abuhabib's second goal in the 27th minute.

The European football-trained Palestine went on to get five more goals with Salem completing a hat-trick with his goal in the 76th and 82nd. Gharqoud and Theeb made it into the scoreboard in succession

with their goals in the 67th and 68th minute, while Atiya earned his second one minute after the regulation.

Against Palestine, the CNMI used the same starters it used versus Nepal with goalkeeper Johann Noetzel and co-captains Trey Dunn and the injured Joe Miller leading the Blue Ayuyus. Also starting out for the Commonwealth were Nick Swaim, Lucas Knecht, Steve McKagan, Dan Westphal, Yuki Adachi, Peter Loken, Bo Barry, and Dae Won Jeon, while Jireh Yobech and Timothy Tawanpiy made their AFC de-

buts, as they came off the bench, along with Raphael Zapanta.

Meanwhile, CNMI supporters still went to Shirley's Coffee Shop in Susupe to watch the live streaming of the Blue Ayuyus and Al-Fursan match, but missed the action, as the connection from the provider was unavailable. No other details about the CNMI's game against Palestine was available, but feedback reaching Saipan showed the Blue Ayuyus stepping up on defense in the second half before allowing the Al-Fursan to score anew in the 67th minute.

SEXY BOYS

From Page 28

2 teams in the 10-squad field will gain automatic semis spots, while the next four will battle for the last two Final Four berth. The bottom four teams will be eliminated. Adobo has already secured one of the semis seat and the Sexy Boys will battle the last Final Four ticket against Chinatown (6-3), and Maplas La Mani (4-3).

Maplas played in the second game last Monday against JWS (2-4), but the match was rained-out with the former ahead, 54-49, 9:33 left in the fourth quarter.

In the curtain-raiser, the Sexy Boys got double figures from five players en route to the

10-point win. John Larot paced the Sexy Boys with his 14 markers, Ardel Tumbaga added 12, Pat Tinio chipped in 11, and Robert and Ray Deleon Guerrero contributed 10 apiece. Herbert Maranan had 8 to complete the Sexy Boys' balanced scoring.

Only John Capuyon Sr. and Art Salazar scored in twin digits for Servitek, which fell to a 1-5 record and is likely to miss the playoffs. Capuyon had a game-high 26 markers, while Salazar logged 10.

Servitek scored no more than 20 points in each quarter to hand the easy win to Sexy Boys, which built a 19-10 cushion with all its eight players lighting up the scoreboard in the opening quarter.

The Sexy Boys continued to

spread the ball well in the second period to increase the advantage to double digits at halftime, 39-28. The second half was the same story, as the Sexy Boys got contributions from every player it fielded in the game, while Servitek leaned heavily on Capuyon.

In the second game, Maplas wiped out JWS' halftime lead to move close to its fifth win.

JWS was on top at the break, 39-31, but fell prey to Maplas' pressure defense in the third quarter and the latter went on to grab the lead, 52-48. Maplas outgunned JWS in the third canto, 21-9, as the latter was held to four field goals and a lot of turnovers. Josephus Aguilar anchored Maplas' third quarter attack, scoring 11 points, in-

cluding a triple in the closing seconds of that canto.

Then in the fourth quarter, Maplas scored the first basket off Dennis Morales' fast-break layup before the referees stopped play as rain began to pour. It rained for more than 15 minutes and teams agreed to reschedule the game, as it was already 10pm.

First Game

Sexy Boys 72 – Larot 14, Tumbaga 12, Tinio 11, Ro, Deleon Guerrero 10, Ra. Deleon Guerrero 10, Maranan 8, Tangcoy 1.

Servitek 62 – Capuyon 26, Salazar 10, Webb 6, Mateo 6, Esconde 4, Detera 4.

Scoring by quarters: 19-10, 39-28, 55-46, 72-62.

SARALU

From Page 28

in runs batted in behind teammate Clifton Salil (4). Brewers' Jared Sablan, Angels' Cruz, and D-9ers' Lizama are all tied with the former at three apiece.

In addition, Yankees' Greg Camacho paces 12 other players in doubles with two, while teammate Brian Camacho and Brewers' Leonard Sablan each boast a homer early on in the season. Batting statistics were based off a minimum of eight at bats.

In pitching, IT&E Fielders' Jimmy Brel leads a four-horse stable of perfect 0.00 earned run averages though his 5 2/3 innings represents the longest shift, thus giving him current dibs on the lead.

Yankees pitcher Dave Camacho leads two other contenders maintaining a perfect 0.00 earned run average from the mound, however the former

holds dibs on the top slot for preserving the mark through seven innings.

Angels' Manny Cabrera and Brel trail close behind with 6 and 5 2/3's inning under their belts, respectively.

Next comes Yankees' Jared Camacho (8 innings pitches), D-9ers' Ben Lizama Jr. (14), Yankees' Bobby Castro (6) and Angels' Franco Flores (6) with three others hanging around above 3.00.

Brewers flame thrower Vince Cepeda (16.2) is well out in front in the strikeout count with 28 and leads teammate Tom Camacho (12), D-9ers' Lizama Jr. (11), Yankees' Dave Camacho (9), and Jared Camacho (9).

Current team standings show the defending champion Yankees atop the field after going undefeated through four games with the 2012 runner-up Brewers (2-2), IT&E Fielders (1-1), the Angels (1-2), and the D-9ers (0-3) filling out the rest of the pecking order.



TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS					WESTERN CONFERENCE				
EASTERN CONFERENCE					Southwest Division				
Atlantic Division					San Antonio	47	14	.770	—
W	L	Pct	GB		Memphis	39	19	.672	6 1/2
New York	36	21	.632	—	Houston	33	28	.541	14
Brooklyn	34	26	.567	3 1/2	Dallas	26	33	.441	20
Boston	31	27	.534	5 1/2	New Orleans	21	40	.344	26
Philadelphia	23	35	.397	13 1/2	Northwest Division				
Toronto	23	38	.377	15	Oklahoma City	43	16	.729	—
Southeast Division					Denver	39	22	.639	5
Miami	44	14	.759	—	Utah	32	28	.533	11 1/2
Atlanta	33	26	.559	11 1/2	Portland	28	31	.475	15
Washington	19	39	.328	25	Minnesota	20	37	.351	22
Orlando	17	44	.279	28 1/2	Pacific Division				
Charlotte	13	47	.217	32	L.A. Clippers	43	19	.694	—
Central Division					Golden State	34	27	.557	8 1/2
Indiana	38	22	.633	—	L.A. Lakers	30	30	.500	12
Chicago	34	26	.567	4	Phoenix	21	39	.350	21
Milwaukee	30	28	.517	7	Sacramento	21	40	.344	21 1/2
Detroit	23	39	.371	16	BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS				
Cleveland	20	40	.333	18					

2013 Saipan Marathon

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO



Japanese comedian Kanpei Hazama, third left front row, pose with winners of the 50K race in last Saturday's 2013 Saipan Marathon.



Saipan's Suzy Kindel, right, and Takumi Sugie, second right, pose with other 10K age group winners.



HANMI president Nick Nishikawa, right kneeling, poses with full and half marathon winners.



Runners watch the awards ceremony at the beach side of the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan.



Five-time 10K winner Noriko Jim is congratulated by a fellow runner.



Back-to-back half marathon winner Terra Allen, left, poses with former Olympian Eric Wainaina Wahinya of Kenya.



Ultra marathon winner Mamiko Oshima-Berger is all smiles, as he receives a plaque from Japanese comedian Kanpei Hazama.



Half marathon sixth place finisher Ronald Villafria poses with former Olympian Eric Wainaina Wahinya of Kenya.



Half marathon fourth finisher Sean Smith receives a mwar from former Olympian Eric Wainaina Wahinya of Kenya.



Half marathon winners show their medals.

**Ravens QB
Flacco signs
NFL's richest
contract**

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Saipan Tribune Sports

**Wade, James
lead Heat to
record 15th
straight win**

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28 WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 2013

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Quality competition in 2013 XTERRA



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

IT&E CEO Bong Mojica, third left, presents his company's \$5,000 check donation for the 2013 XTERRA Saipan Championship during the turn-over ceremony at the IT&E office in Chalan Laulau yesterday. Attending the presentation are, from left, IT&E's Brad Ruzsala, pro Olivier Marceau, IT&E managing director Rose Soledad, Taga, Inc. committee member Bobbi Grizzard, pro Rory Downie, and Marianas Visitors Authority's Frank Tudela. Sitting, from left, are pro Sam Gardner and race director Bill Sakovich.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

With an elite group of pro triathletes racing in the 2013 XTERRA Saipan Championship, organizers boast a top class competition this Saturday.



XTERRA
SAIPAN

"With all the Top 5 men's finishers in XTERRA Philippines and three of the Top 4 female joining XTERRA Saipan, you can expect a quality competition this weekend. We will have a very strong field," race director and former Taga, Inc. president Bill Sakovich said.

Sakovich is talking of XTERRA Philippines back-to-back champion Ben Allen of Australia, runner-up Dan Hugo of South Africa, Sam Gardner of the United Kingdom, Bradley Weiss of South Africa, and Olivier Marceau of Switzerland/France and women's division's Renata Bucher, Daz Parker, and Jacqui Slack. Also on the list

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Sexy Boys wins; Maplas leads JWS

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER



The Sexy Boys boosted its chances for an outright semis seat in Division B of the 2013 DLX/Anchor Strong Invi-

tational after dominating Servitek, 72-62, last Monday night at the Gualo Rai Basketball Court.

The Sexy Boys improved to a 6-2 record, snapping its two-game losing skid and taking second place behind the undefeated Adobo (7-0). The Top

See SEXY BOYS on Page 26



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Maplas La Mani's Ralph Surla blocks the reverse layup of JWS' Joel Saplan's during the second quarter of their rained-out game in Division B of the DLX/Anchor Strong caging last Monday at the Gualo Rai Basketball Court.

CNMI bows to Palestine

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER



Heavily favored Palestine denied the CNMI Men's National Team from getting its elusive first goal in the Asian Football Confederation 2014 Challenge Cup Qualifiers after cruising to a 9-0 win last Monday night at the Dashrath Stadium in Kathmandu, Nepal.

KH Salem made life difficult for CNMI defenders, as the Palestine forward scored a hat-trick in the lopsided game. Fellow forwards Allaa Atiya and Abdulhamid Abuhabib added two goals apiece, while defender Haytham Theeb and another forward Iyad Gharqoud chipped in one for the No. 153 FIFA-ranked Palestine, which needs only a draw against host Nepal today to top Group D and clinch a spot to the 2014 AFC Challenge Cup, which will be held from March 8 to 23, 2014

See CNMI on Page 26



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CNMI Men's National Team forward Peter Loken, right, gets tangled with Palestine midfielder Faheem Isaili during their game in the Asian Football Confederation 2014 Challenge Cup Qualifiers last Monday night at the Dashrath Stadium in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Saralu, Camacho lead batting and pitching

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER



Tan Holdings Brewers' Nokki Saralu and Saipan Stevedore Co. Northern Yankees' Dave Camacho are pacing the Saipan Major League's batting and pitching statistics as of last Friday.

Saralu so far has six hits in just nine at bats for an impressive hitting rate of 0.667, is edging D-9ers' Rocco Reyes (0.625), Yankees' Greg F. Camacho (0.500), St. Michael Medical Response Angel' John B. Reyes (0.500), Ben Jones (0.444), Gary Cruz (0.417), and Nunu Kapileo (0.400), D-9ers' E.J. Tenorio (0.375), and IT&E's Ricardo Dela Cruz (0.375) with three others floating batting averages above 0.300.

Saralu has also scored a league-high seven runs and is included in the triples club along with seven other players.

Saralu is also tangled in a four-way tie for second place

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WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND

Tan Holdings Brewers third baseman Nokki Saralu, right, looks to home after attempting to tag out a runner in this file photo from earlier in this year's 2013 SML season at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.